MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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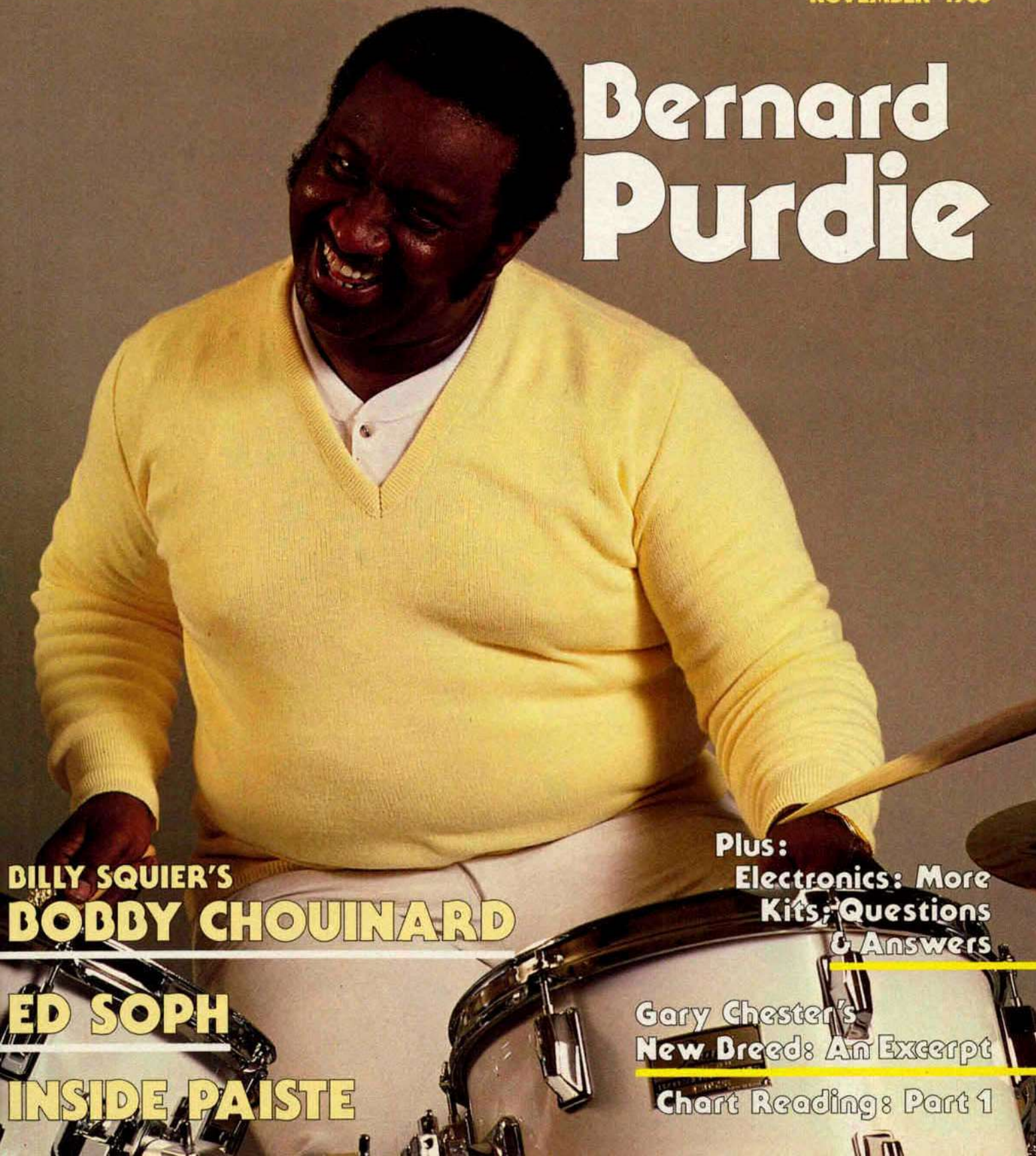


Bernard Purdie

BILLY SQUIER'S

BOBBY CHOUINARD

ED SOPH

INSIDE PAISTE

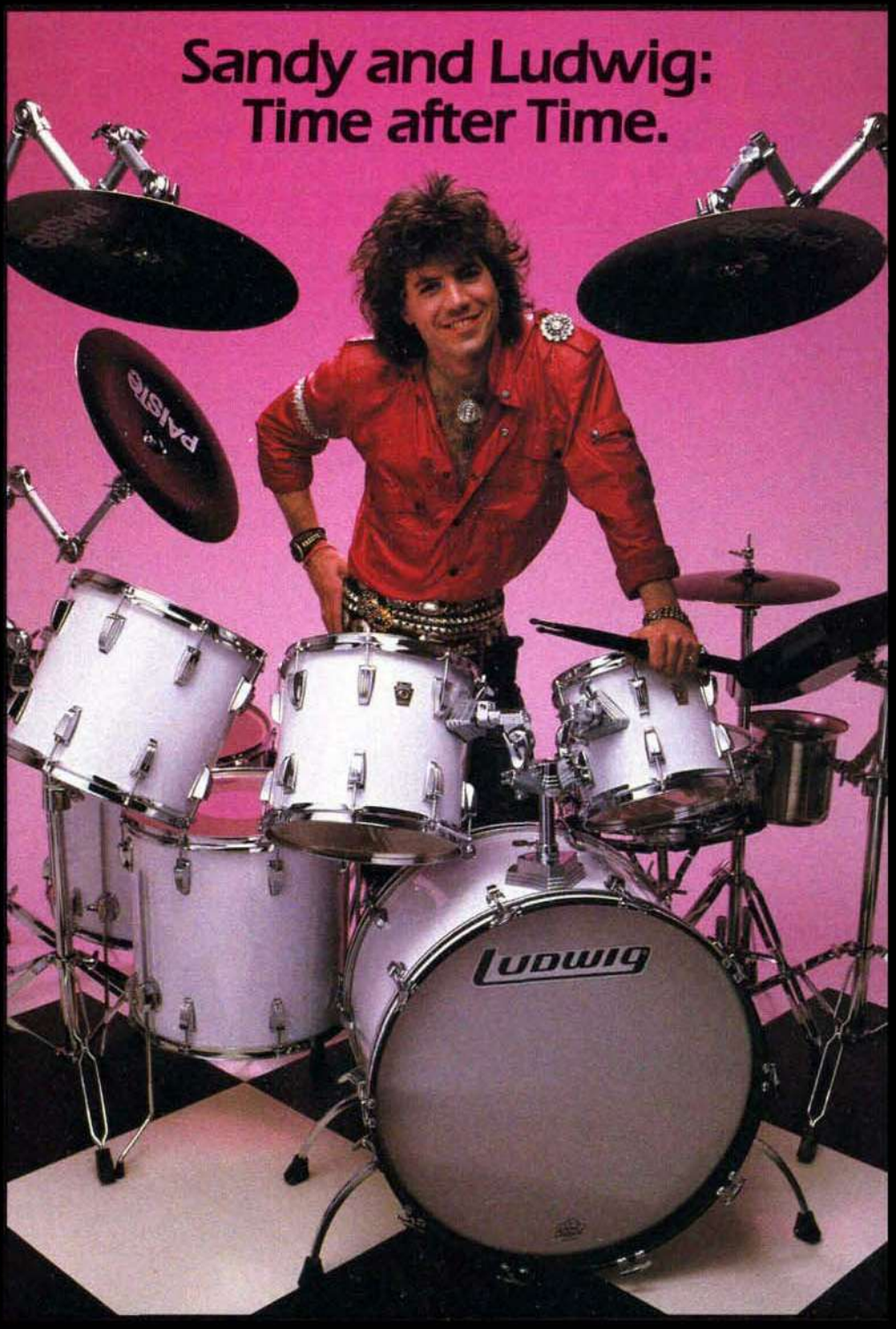
Plus:
Electronics: More Kits; Questions & Answers

Gary Chester's New Breed: An Excerpt

Chart Reading: Part 1

L U D W I G

Sandy and Ludwig: Time after Time.



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Cover Photo by Ebet Roberts

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BERNARD "PRETTY" PURDIE

He's outspoken and flamboyant, but he gets away with it because he has a groove that can't be denied. He's "Pretty" Purdie, and his credits include Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Ray Charles, Jeff Beck, and Mongo Santamaria. Purdie talks about his early career as a New York studio drummer, his distinctive sound, and his teaching philosophies, and discusses his controversial claim that he played on a number of The Beatles records.
by Connie Fisher 8

BOBBY CHOUINARD

As the drummer for rock vocalist/guitarist Billy Squier, Bobby Chouinard is an integral part of the unique Squier sound. In this interview, Bobby discusses his creative input to this music, as well as his views on playing live versus recording, his work with Gary Moore and Ted Nugent, and his recent experiences as a record producer.
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ED SOPH

Soph originally distinguished himself with the bands of Woody Herman and Stan Kenton, but for the last few years, Ed has made teaching his primary focus, working with students both privately and through the Jamey Aebersold clinics. Here, he explains the concepts behind his playing and teaching, and discusses his contention that only one percent of drum students are really serious.
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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

The Drum Bug

Just what is this drum bug, anyway? Well, it's a curious little devil that has befuddled the American Medical Association for years. Unfortunately it's rather impossible to shake the effects of the bite once you've been bitten, and bite it does, anyone at any age, anywhere—anytime!

Being bitten more than 30 years ago myself, I've made a rather in-depth study of this strange phenomenon over the years, and have discussed the problem with hundreds of fellow victims. I've finally managed to compile a list of symptoms to help you determine if, in fact, *you* may have been bitten at some point yourself. Join the club if you've ever experienced:

1. An odd sense of euphoria upon receipt of the latest drum catalog of just about any major manufacturer.
2. A curious desire to spend the better portion of your day off in a drum shop, examining everything in sight, and generally making a nuisance of yourself.
3. A strange compulsion to purchase every new piece of drum equipment that appears on the market.
4. An inner restlessness when deprived of the opportunity to strike any drum-like object for a period of two days or more.
5. An obsession to attend every clinic, watch every video, read every word, and buy every recording remotely connected with your favorite drummer.
6. A penchant for counting the hours from noon to the gig at 9:30.
7. A strong inclination to doodle "dream drumsets" on scrap paper during most idle moments.
8. A self-destructive wish to sit in with the band up the street, immediately following five grueling hours on your own gig.
9. An uncanny ability to annoy people with finger paradiddles, played on practically any available surface, usually at the most inopportune times.
10. A deep-rooted sense of guilt that occurs after shelling out $200 on a ride cymbal, knowing full well that you're badly in need of new shoes for your sister's wedding.

The above list represents some of the most troublesome symptoms. However, several other less common, yet equally devastating, situations have also been reported. Do any of these sound familiar? Like when you totally lost sight of the movie plot because you were distracted by the *great* drumming on the soundtrack; the very first time you realized that the most important thing you had to do that day was oil your bass drum pedal; the last time you ignored your date at dinner while you jotted down a great new funk beat on a paper napkin; or the first time you noticed that, when forced to decide between spending your last few bucks on a copy of *Playboy* or *MD,* you chose MD!

If you could relate to more of the above than you'd like to admit—welcome! To date, there's no known cure for the bite, and efforts to control the problem have proved futile. But be consoled by the fact that you're not alone. Millions are victims just like you. Our immediate recommendation? Curl up with a copy of *MD,* take two aspirin, and call a drum shop in the morning!

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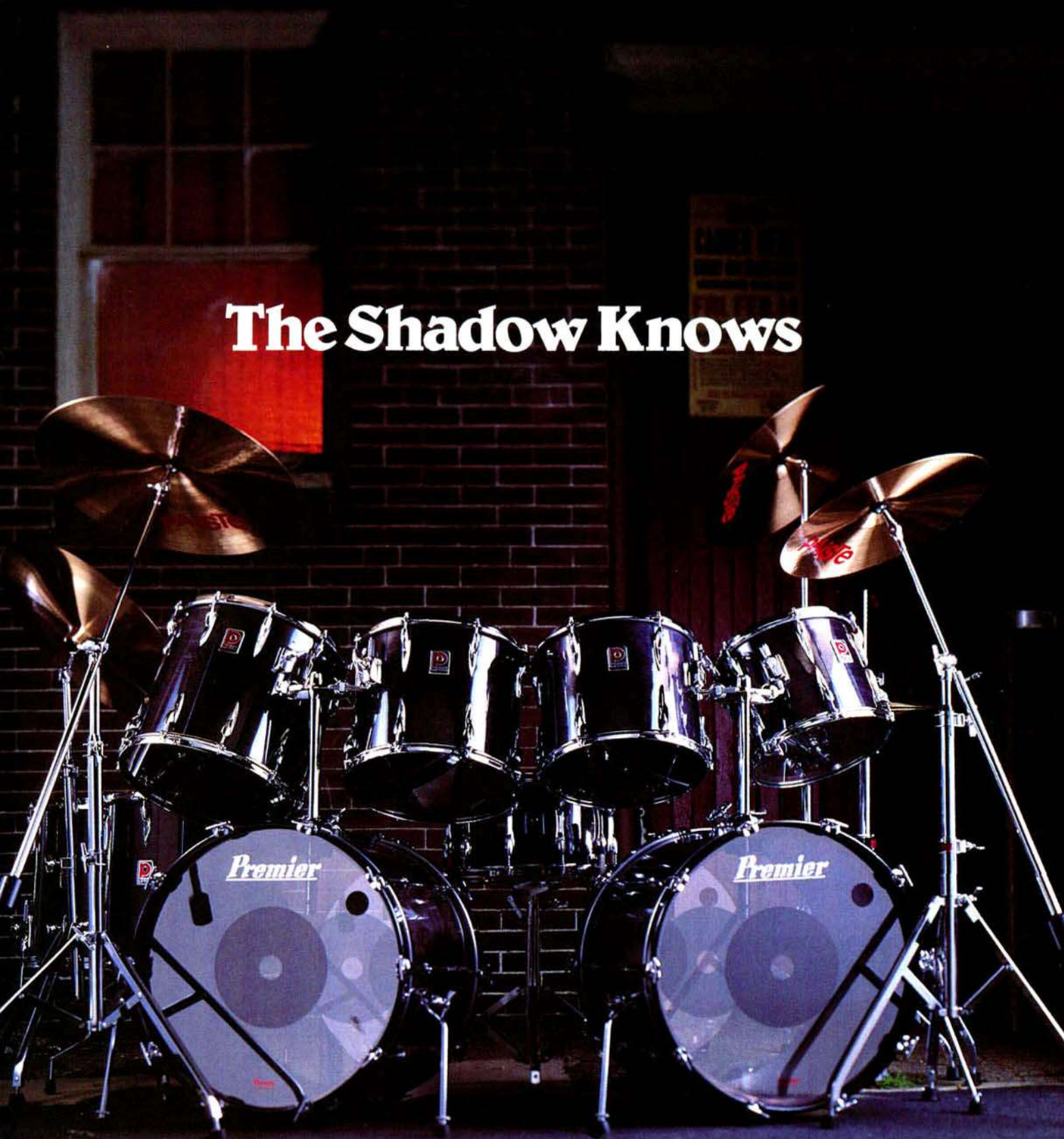

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READER'S PLATFORM

LARRY MULLEIN, JR.

Thanks so much for the article on Larry Mullen, Jr., in your August '85 issue. So many times people get caught up in the spiritual aspect of U2, and lose the reality that they're people and not gods. Thanks, Larry, for a fresh breath in the real world.

Chuck Vess
Oceanside, CA

TOMMY CAMPBELL

I want to thank you for the fine article on Tommy Campbell. Tommy and I attended Berklee College of Music at the same time, and 1 knew that sooner or later he would make it into your magazine. On first meeting Tommy, 1 knew he was a great guy—along with his musicianship and his love of the instrument. I knew he would reach his goals—and more! He practiced hard and took it seriously. (And I should know; we often practiced in rooms across from one another, and became good friends while discussing ideals and concepts of drumming.) I'm very proud of Tommy and his achievements. He deserved it all. Thanks for the great article on a great player and friend.

Ronnie Atwater
Kailua Kona, Hawaii

DRUMMING AND VIDEO

I'd like to compliment you on your article on "Improving Your Drumming With Video," which appeared in the July edition of *MD*. After reading your article, I'm sure that both teachers and students realize that "Video is more than just a passing fad." One important advantage that we've found with our video drum students is that they are able to use the video tapes as often as they like, at home. Thus, the student can get additional personal-type drum instruction, with the end result of playing concepts more precisely and in a much shorter amount of time. The building of anyone's self-confidence and desire to continue learning at an accelerated pace is the real satisfaction of providing good instruction. Keep up the good work on letting us know not only about new products but about new ideas on how to use them.

Kevin D. Gazzara
Director of Marketing
M&K Products
Harleysville, PA

ADAM WOODS

I have just finished reading your article on Adam Woods [July '85 *MD],* and was shocked by what was included. I find Robin Tolleson a talented writer, but I took one statement to be offensive. Robin stated that The Fixx draws a young crowd—a crowd that "may not understand the subtleties of Adam Woods' drumming, the intelligent approach he has to recording . ..." As a young Fixx fan—as well as a drummer—I could not believe a magazine as highly respected as *MD* would let such an assumption be printed. Just because we don't sit down and analyze every beat doesn't mean we don't appreciate the fine quality of playing put forth by such bands.

Tony Long
Cheshire, CT

GERMAN MUSIC PROGRAMS

Thanks to Roy Burns for his enthusiastic report on the "International Drummers' Meeting" in Koblenz, Germany, which was featured in your June issue. There is, however, one statement by Roy that I cannot agree with. He seems to be misinformed about music education in public schools in Germany, since he states that "public schools don't have music programs."

Not only do we have public school music education programs from the first grade on, but there are school concert bands, chamber groups, jazz bands, and even symphony orchestras. Several high schools offer a program that leads to a percussion major diploma! As a matter of fact, I have worked on a list of recital pieces for high school diplomas for percussion students in our state, and I have put Roy's *Drumset Music* right on that list. Several students performed pieces from it at the end of the last school year.

Public music schools—open to all high school and grade school students every afternoon—offer everything in music education that one could dream of for a rather small tuition. Furthermore, master classes and concerts with international performers have been organized. Just to mention a few who have been at our school percussion department: Ed Thigpen, Joe Morello, Carmine Appice, Rick Latham, Danny Gottlieb, Dave Friedman, Bill Molenhof, and Ed Soph. Hopefully, Roy himself will drop in one day to see that music education in Germany is on the go!

Heinz von Moisy
Director, Percussion Department
Tuebingen Music School
Tuebingen, Germany

THE ROADIE'S ANGLE

I thoroughly enjoyed your May issue, especially the article by Bev Bevan entitled, "Rock Touring: Then And Now." Bev seemed to give a realistic view of what it is like to be on the road; he neither glamorized it nor put it down. He also emphasized the importance of establishing a good understanding and friendship between himself and his road crew, so that things could run as smoothly as possible. I believe that an article written about touring from the point of view of a drum roadie would be an interesting angle. Such an article would allow the people behind the scenes to step out into the limelight and be recognized for their hard work. It would also allow the readers to find out how tough and demanding being a roadie actually is. Please think this possibility over, and meanwhile, keep up the good work!

Jason Junes
Grangeville, ID

THANKS FROM NEIL

I remember writing to you five or six years ago in shock and gratitude after my first appearance in your *Readers Poll.* My reaction at the time may well have surprised some people, as indeed it did me. Receiving this greatest of praises from my peers, instead of reinforcing my self-confidence, actually *undermined* it! I felt unworthy . . . overrated ... a fraud. I think I half-jokingly wrote that it had made a neurotic out of me. Every little mistake that I made on stage seemed amplified in my mind and to scream out "betrayal" to all those misguided enough to have voted for me—a *bum.*

I have this problem with appreciation. Without it, I am unhappy—bitter and frustrated. Yet *with* it, I am unhappy—embarrassed and awkward. Perhaps I am not alone in this. I tried to explain these feelings—unsuccessfully I fear—during my last interview in MD's pages.

At bottom, I guess it's like the Groucho Marx line (by way of Woody Allen) that I wouldn't want to belong to a club that would have *me* for a member. Anyone who thinks *I'm* that good must be crazy, or misguided, or just plain *weird.*

Don't get me wrong; I *am* truly honored and grateful to receive these awards. Who wouldn't be? The "Recorded Performance" award particularly means a lot to me, judging a specific performance as it does. (Though I must admit hanging in the Hall of Fame doesn't hurt too badly either!)

I know there are many players who know more than I do, and many who—in my opinion—play better than I do. But the impetus of these undeserved honors has truly spurred me to work *harder,* in order to earn and deserve this highest praise. For this service alone, I thank you all very much. Oh yes, you *are* all crazy, misguided, and weird—but who isn't?

With sincere gratitude,

Neil Peart
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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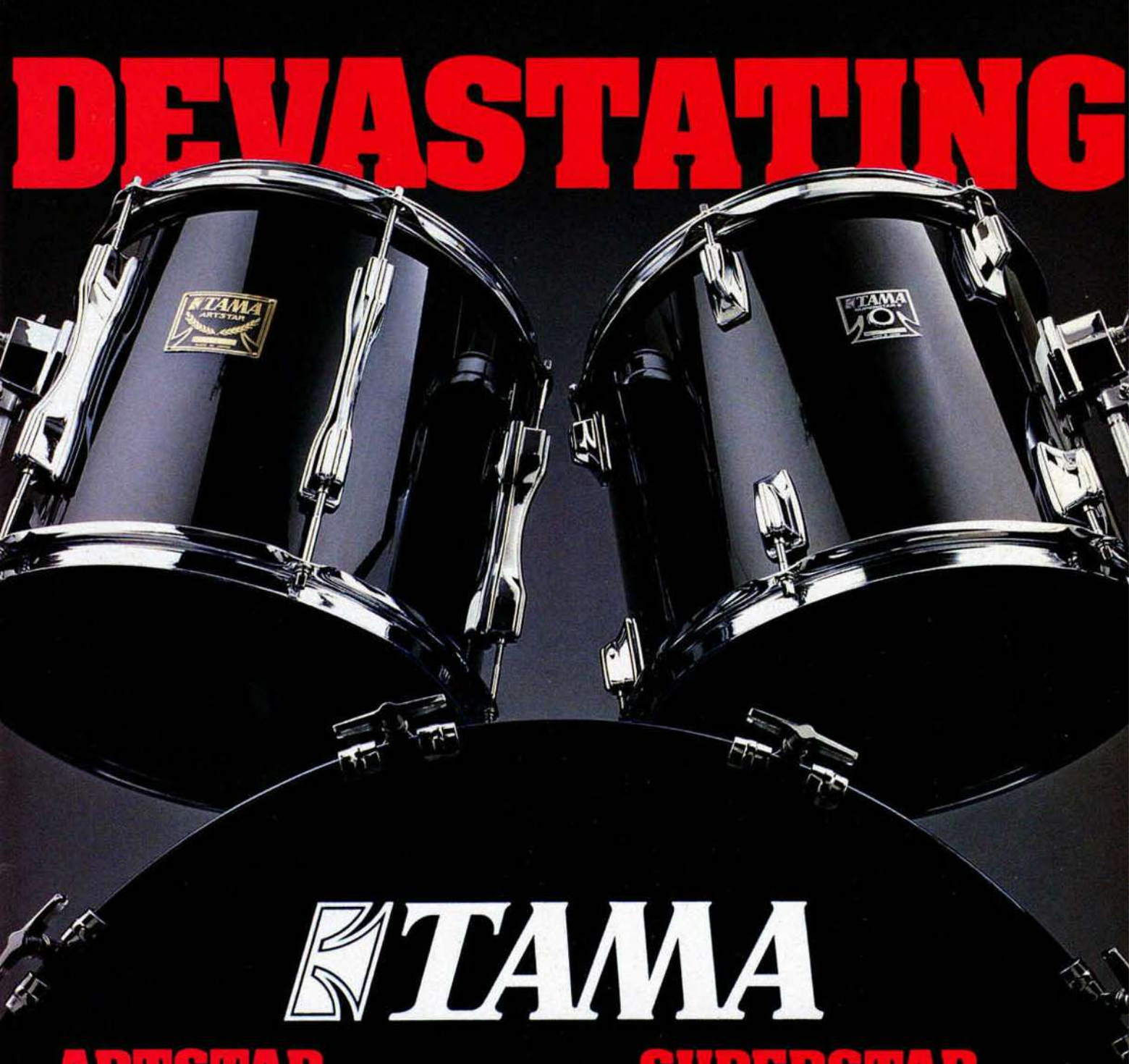
DEVASTATING



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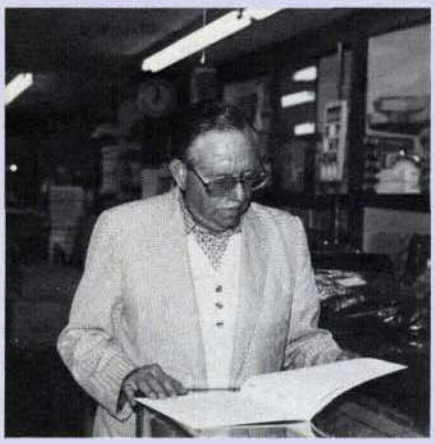
ASK A PRO

HENRY ADLER



Q. Could you tell me if the wooden tone-control practice pad and adjustable stand that you taught students on during the '60s is still available from music dealers? It was the best I ever owned. Also, could you recommend a bass drum technique book or method which coincides with your *Buddy Rich's Snare Drum Rudiments* book? I am looking for material to develop my hands and feet during each practice session, without various limbs being inactive for long durations.

Bruce Allen
Loudonville, NY

A. I'm afraid the Multi-Tone Pad *Is not available at present, due to increased production costs. We hope to find a way to produce this item again in the near future. As for your second question, I'd recommend* Double Drums *by Louie Bellson and Jim Petercsak. This book employs both feet—either double bass or single bass and hi-hat—in combination with complete drumset studies. Some of the exercises should keep your two hands and feet "busy as a bee."*

DAVID GARIBALDI

Q. I love your style and sound, and I'd like to know what kind of books you've studied in the past or at present.

Chris Harris
Somerville, MA

A. Thanks for the compliment. Here are a few titles that have helped me in the past, and that I still refer to today: Contemporary Studies For The Advanced Snare Drummer, *by Fred Albright;* 50 Snare Drum Etudes, *by Al Lepak;* Stick Control For The Snare Drummer, *by George Lawrence Stone; and* Contemporary Funk Patterns, *(Books I and II), by Gary Chaffee.*

SIMON PHILLIPS

Q. I've just purchased a Tama *Artstar* kit consisting of a 24" bass, 13" and 14" rack toms, an 18" floor tom and a 6 1/2" deep snare. I love the sound of your drums, and I've tried just about everything in tuning mine, but can't get them to sound like yours. Could you give me some advice as to how I should tune mine so that they will sound like yours?

Patrick Doody
Tinley Park, IL

A. I tend to tune the kick drum very low and loose, although without too many wrinkles in it. I do use a front head, also tuned low and loose, and with a small hole cut slightly off center, just big enough to fit a microphone through. I use a towel, rolled up and taped to the shell so that it touches the batter head, to dampen the sound.

As far as toms go, tune the top and bottom heads both fairly tight, and to basically the same pitch. Tune each head individually, by placing the tom on a drum throne so that one head is muted while you're tuning the other. For the snare, tune the bottom head fairly tight, and even tighter in the snare bed area. Don't worry if the hoop bends. You should have a look at mine; it looks like a roller-coaster track, but that's what's needed to keep good contact between the snares and the snare side head. Tune the top head as tight as you want it for pitch, and don't use too much dampening—a thing to watch with all of the kit. Just remember, the nearer you are to the kit, the more ring you hear, but out front you need that ring to project the sound. Best of luck!

PHIL COLLINS

Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

Q. I was interested to see you play drum setups for both left-handed and right-handed drummers during your recent concert here in Lexington. Aside from being impressed with your versatility, I am curious to know if you are naturally right- or left-handed, and the circumstances leading to the use of the different setups.

Kevin Gibbs
Lexington, KY

Q. When you played at the Omni in Atlanta, Georgia, recently, I noticed you were playing what appeared to be a 10" flat cymbal with a square bell, which was the second cymbal from the right on your kit. It sounded and was played like a crash cymbal. What type is it? And could you please explain why you didn't include Simmons drums with your kit?

Thomas Swartz
Leisure City, FL

A. Kevin's question is a little confusing, since it infers that I played right- and *left-handed kits on stage in Lexington. In fact, all I played was my own left-handed white Gretsch kit. Chester played his right-handed kit and a kit of Simmons. I've always played a left-handed setup; it never crossed my mind to uncross my hands on a right-handed setup.*

The cymbal Thomas is referring to is a Paiste Rude *cymbal. Although I endorse Sabian, I still use odds and ends from different makes if they sound good. Lastly, I didn't use Simmons drums personally on my tour because I only played drums on three songs (!) and I didn't need them on those tunes. I will be using them with Genesis next time out.*

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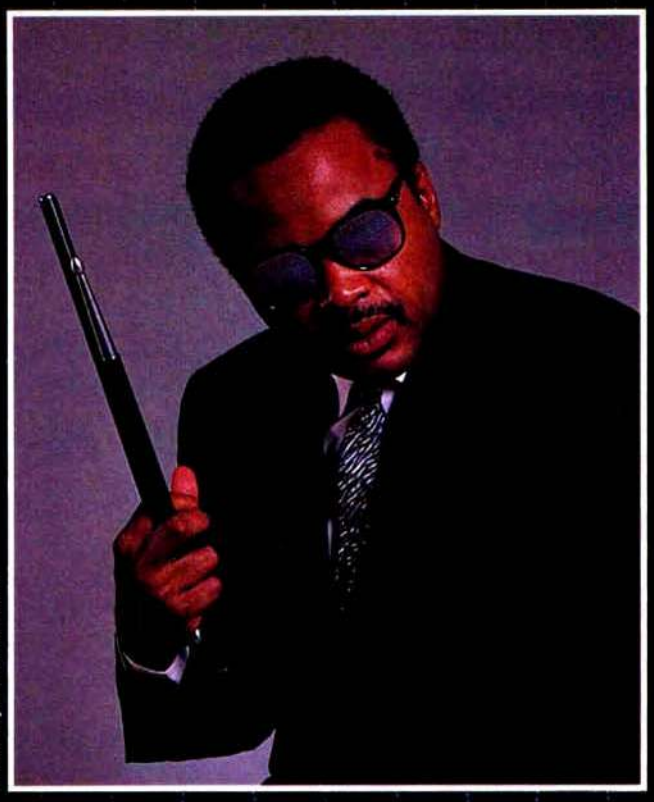

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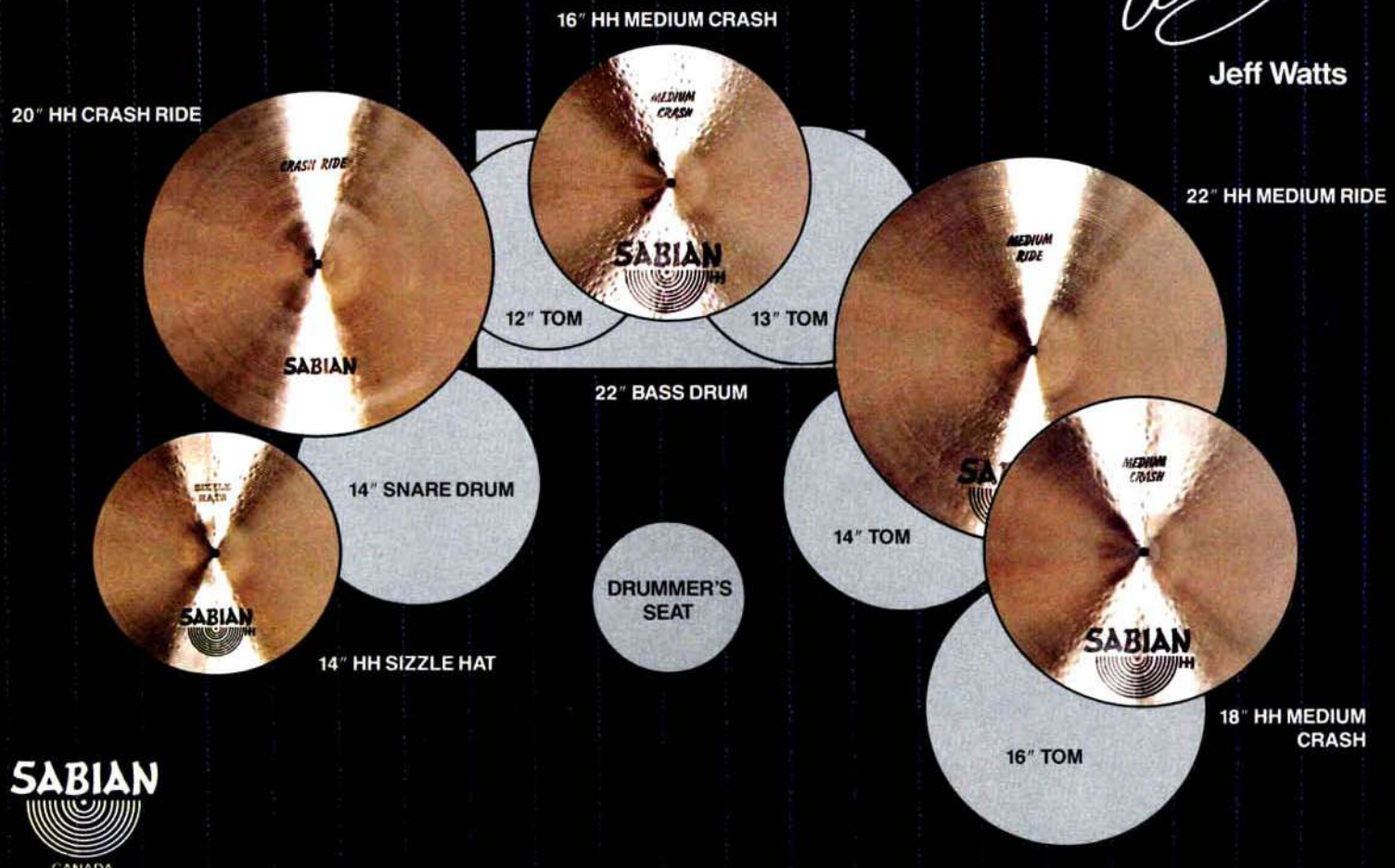
Jeff Watts



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YOUR lover did you wrong? It ain't worth cryin' over. Put on a Bernard Purdie record. Peelin' fallin' from the ceilin'? Don't worry about it. Get into that Purdie groove. Another gray day? Go out and watch "Pretty" Purdie play drums. You'll feel alright.

Known as the "Father Time" of modern drumming, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie has drummed up an almost unbeatable record of over 3,000 album credits, many of them smash hits. He has cut across all stylistic barriers to play with a wide range of musicians: Aretha Franklin, Jeff Beck, Herbie Hancock, Hall & Oates, Steely Dan, Dizzy Gillespie, Gato Barbieri, James Brown, Paul Simon, King Curtis, Ray Charles, Mongo Santamaria. That's just a sampling. And though he's slowed down a bit from his incredible schedule of 15 to 20 studio sessions a week during the music-soaked '60s, he's still going strong.

"My job is to support the singer or the lead instrument—first, last, and always," he declares with an almost religious sense of devotion, and you've got to believe that whoever's out front is solid and secure on Purdie's shoulders. True to his covenant, Bernard doesn't "showboat" it on stage with flashy solos or twirling drumsticks that glow in the dark. Yet his fat and funky grooves, along with those simmering, simple but sophisticated hi-hat licks that are his signature, will overtake you on the most primal level, and before you know it, your body's moving and your eyes are fastened on Purdie.

At his drumset, he's a study in concentration. With eyes closed, his face takes on a beatific glow as his drum rhythms transport him to his own realms of ecstasy—Drummers' Heaven. Just let him groove all night, and he's happy.

Your first impression of Bernard might be that he resembles a black Buddha. He's got the serenity in his smile, the slight slant to his eyes, and a physical size that indicates he's enjoyed a meal or two. But this Buddha doesn't just sit there silently. If you're willing to listen, he'll share with you all the wisdom he's gained from 30 years in the music business. He'll tell you about the highs, the hurrahs, the slights and the slings, not to mention what it took to make it from the small town of Elkton, Maryland, born number 11 of 15 children and orphaned at 13.

He's expansive, he's controversial, he's generous, and he's a bit braggadocio, but he can back it up. His braggadocio is the shield of a deeply sensitive man. You may or may not like everything Bernard says, but it's hard not to like Bernard. He's got his faults and weaknesses, no doubt about it—we all do—but that's the beauty of the man. He's a human being—the genuine article. He's got soul. Sure, he's trying to hustle a good living like the rest of us nowadays, but he's no boardroom type. He might even try to base decisions on cold logic, '80s style, but you know he'll follow his heart in the end.

BP: They've always said I came out kicking. My drumming practice started on bread cans; by the time I was six, I was bashing them all in. I come from a poor country family in Maryland. We commuted back and forth to North Carolina five months out of the year to pick cotton, tobacco, watermelon, and peanuts. I did that for ten years, but 1 didn't know it was hard work. You get used to it, and it becomes a way of life. I guess I've been hungry all my life, and I don't really want to lose that. I came from nowhere, and I broke through a lot of barriers to get where I did, as a drummer and as a man. 1 was the first black in the whole state of Maryland to graduate from a previously all-white school.

CF: Why you?

BP: They wanted integration to start, but it was voluntary. The all-black school 1 went to, George Washington Carver, didn't offer any college-prep courses, and I realized 1 wasn't prepared for anything. To show how poor everything was, when I entered the all-white school in 12th grade, I was reading at 7th-grade level, and I had been at the top of the class at George Washington Carver. 1 had to work hard to bring that up, and 1 did—three or four levels in one year.

CF: You went to college for a few years, and then you came to New York City to make it as a drummer. How did the word get out on Bernard Purdie?

BP: How did the word get out? Every day I'd be downtown asking for a job. That's how the word gets out! After a few days in town, I had made $80 on a studio gig with Mickey & Sylvia, and I thought I had hit the big time! But in two days, I had $12 left, so I got a job in a laundry on 49th Street. I'd finish the job at 3:00, and at 3:15 I'd be at 50th and Broadway, standing around where the musicians hung out, asking them to give me a job—every day, five days a week, for months. All I wanted was a shot. The few

by Connie Fisher *Photo by Lissa Wales*

PRETTY

PURDIE

Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

times I got to show them my stuff, I overplayed, but I *played.* I'd give them every chop I knew in five minutes—the whole history of drumming. They didn't know *what* I was playing, but they liked it. Buddy Lucas, the saxophone player, said, "Man, you sound like one of those Mississippi boys. Mississippi Bigfoot—that's what I'm gonna call you!" I said, "I don't care what you call me; just call me!"

I was hanging out one day at the Turf Club. Barney Richmond, a contractor, came into the place saying, "Any drummers in the house?" I jumped up, yelling, "I can do it!" He had seen me for months, and asked the same thing. He said, "No, man, I need a *real* drummer." So he walked around to a musicians' bar around the corner. The place was packed, but there weren't any drummers. He asked again, "Any drummers in the place?" I was right behind him, and everybody was laughing, because I was so loud and obnoxious. So Buddy Lucas said, "Aw, Barney, give him a shot." Barney was desperate, so he took me to Allegro studio. The session musicians were just standing around there, and I walked in. You could see it in their faces: "Who is this nut?" Barney was in the control room, on the telephone, still looking for a drummer. I walked over and scanned the charts on the piano, and then I sat down at the drums. The bass player began playing a little line, and I started in with a 4 on the rim, cross stick. The other guys joined in, and before you knew it, we were cooking! So Doris Troy came out and heard the song being played! She started singing. In the meantime, they were still in the control room arguing about finding a drummer. They looked outside and saw Doris moving to the music, but there wasn't a button turned on. The engineer finally turned on the dials and started running the tape. And bam, we did it in one take. The song was cut in 20 minutes—"Just One Look." A month later, I heard it on the radio; they had used that demo as the master. I was so excited, and then I realized I had never gotten paid for the session! But it didn't matter.

CF: From that point on, things started to roll. You played on Les Cooper's big hit, "Wiggle Wobble," in 1962, and you were about the hottest studio drummer in the '60s. How much say did you have in your studio drum sound in those days?

BP: I had plenty of say, because at the time not too many microphones were used on the drums in the studio; there was one on the bass, one for the hi-hats and snare, one for the toms, and then possibly one overhead—four. And that was a lot. They would turn the mic's to a certain point to get the overall sound, and then I would play the way I wanted, with my own dynamics; I controlled it, not the engineer. So I would choose what sound I wanted to dominate, be it the snare, the hi-hat—whatever. Let's say Chuck Rainey was into a bass line that was dominant. Well, I didn't want to create a line on the bass drum to fight with him. I would want to *enhance* what he had, so I would play *around* his bass line. I would make my snare or hi-hat dominant to keep that going along with Chuck. And that's how we got that tight rhythm sound, which we called a locomotion.

"IF YOUR EGO IS BIG ENOUGH AND YOU SHOW SELF-CONFIDENCE, SOMEONE IS GOING TO GIVE YOU A SHOT."

CF: It was all interaction and integration, right there on the spot.

BP: Yes. Then in the late '60s, more and more tracks came in, and we started to lose our own creativity, because engineers wanted certain things. It became more complex. Our playing was divided into parts, and it was up to the engineer to put the parts together. I think this division caused rhythm

sections to listen to each other less. I was losing control over what I played, because they had all these independent tracks, so I had to tighten up my sound, in order to make one particular sound dominate. I had to recreate my sound, so that no one could take any part away without taking away the whole thing. It was like a total ball of energy that you couldn't pull apart. They *wanted* to pull it apart; they tried to put everything on separate tracks and play around with it. But when they did, they found that they lost the feel that was in there in the first place. Then they had to go back and rediscover it—that soul, that human touch.

CF: Do you feel that the '60s were a better time overall for the studio musician?

BP: That was the only time that studio musicians got any respect from the music business.

CF: Why?

BP: Well, it worked this way: There was a feeling of freedom and rebellion in the '60s, and what made it *different* was that the people who were rebelling were rich kids. Their folks had made all this money, and they didn't want the kids around. It's a drag to say that, but that's what it was—rejection. So the kids said, "Well, you don't want us around, so we're going to do our own thing and you're going to pay for it." So they got into the music business, as producers, promoters, players—whatever. They didn't have any training, but the music business gave them an outlet and a way to make their own money. It was a good thing for the studio musicians, because while these kids had the money to make the records, they needed the expertise of the professionals. But after a while, they became tired of always paying someone else, so they started experimenting and doing the playing themselves. By the end of the '60s, the studio musicians were being pushed aside, and as the '70s began, the bands were mostly doing their own playing.

CF: What you're saying is that, in the '60s, there were a lot of bands that weren't good enough to play, so they hired professionals.

BP: Exactly. That was the way it was, especially with the British groups—The Dave Clark Five, The Animals, The Who, The Beatles. Many bands used studio musicians. If and when they learned how to play, the studio musicians were out.

CF: Why didn't the studio musicians get together and form their *own* bands?

BP: Money. When you stop being a studio musician, you stop making money. We made more money than doctors and lawyers during the '60s, but you had to be on the scene at all times. You couldn't afford to go out and spend two weeks or a month with your own band on the road. You'd lose your spot in that studio world.

CF: In two or three weeks?

BP: Yes. In two or three weeks, you could be replaced. [snaps his fingers] The only time you wouldn't be replaced was if you let them know you were on vacation, because this was a business, and that was how it was done. No one would call you for that two weeks you were on vacation, but they'd be booking you for work on the day you were scheduled to be back. It was a nine-to-five job, by the book. If you went off the scene, you were out! And if you decided to become a band and that band didn't happen big for you, you were also out, because you did something that was a no-

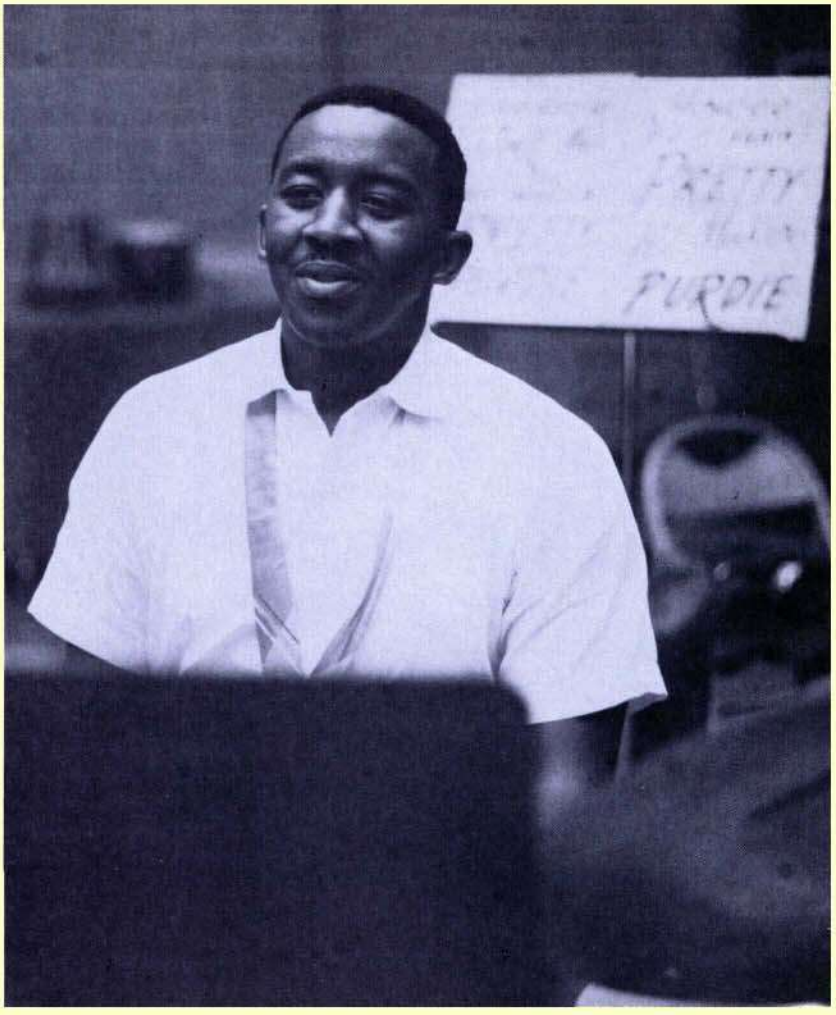

Photo by Charles Stewart

Purdie in the early '60s

no. If you tried to do something on your own, you wanted to get too big, and it meant that they couldn't dictate to you anymore. That's what this business is about and will always be about—dictation—DIC-TA-TION. That means the young kid down the street can come in and tell Bernard Purdie, "Now I want you to play such-and-such," and tell Eric Gale, "Play it *this* way." If you want to be in that little circle of the studio, you have to do what you're told.

CF: It doesn't sound like such a happy life.

BP: It's not a happy life per se. The happiness comes from the handful of musicians who work together in the studio, because when those musicians get together, it doesn't matter what *anybody* says. Eventually, you're going to have to do it your way *anyhow*. You've got musicians there who you respect, and from that nucleus, that groove is going to happen.

CF: You were talking about how much money you could make in the studio in the '60s. Can you do that today?

BP: Rarely. If you want to make the kind of money we did in the '60s, you have to work *hard*—very hard. Steve Gadd gets paid extra, but he works very hard. The problem so many musicians in the '60s had was we took the money and blew it, for many reasons. Drugs—they were very plentiful in the '60s. Drinking—it was easy—smoking, women—the whole works.

But there were exceptions to the rule, and I was one of them. I didn't drink, because I was an alcoholic when I was 11, so I knew what alcohol was. I stopped at 13. Smoking—couldn't stand to see my money going up in smoke. Drugs—out of the *question*! I saw my idols walking down the street asking people for 25 cents to get some coffee or something to eat. That hurt me to my heart so much that I never wanted to *try* it. I've never been high off anything except in the dentist's chair. I don't need anything I can't control, and I ain't interested in finding out.

CF: Okay, Bernard, you said drinking, smoking, and drugs were out. You didn't mention women.

Photo by Ebet Roberts

(Left to right) Cornell Dupree, Lou Marini, Dr. John, Bernard Purdie, Hank Crawford, and Ronnie Cuba.

BP: [Laughs] Women? Loved 'em to death! It was a downfall.
CF: Have you ever been married?
BP: I was married twice. I have two families: four kids by my first wife, and my second wife had three. They're all pretty much grown now.
CF: I know it can be hard on a family when a musician's on the road. Did you do any live playing during the '60s?
BP: Yes, I did. After doing 15 to 20 dates a week in the studio for almost 12 years, I was becoming so frustrated in the studio that I felt I was boring. That wasn't what other people were telling me, but that was how *I* felt. So I went out on the road with King Curtis. I wasn't on the road that much, but it was a pleasure for me to go on the road, because I got a chance to visit people all over the world. But I'm basically a family person. After the gig was over, *99%* of the time I was back at the hotel, exhausted. I mean, I loved what I did, but I worked hard! Then I'd be up at 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning, ready to catch the plane and see what was in the next town. I enjoyed being around people. I know that people think when you're on the road it's all wine, women, and song, but if I had tried to live up to that image, I wouldn't be here. Anybody knows that.

"YOU MUST NEVER THINK OF MONEY WHEN YOU'RE ON THAT STAGE OR IN THAT STUDIO. YOU WON'T PLAY RIGHT IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT GETTING PAID."

But the music business does make it tough on family life. Any woman who puts up with a man in the music business has *got* to be a superwoman. And if he's a superstar, she's got to be *two* superwomen. Everybody out there is after him. And what do they want? They want his body. Then they want his money. All they want to do is be able to talk about him. I've seen it all the time. That can be hard on a wife's ego.
CF: Speaking of ego, how important is ego in making it as a successful musician?
BP: *Very.* If you don't have it, you're up a creek, because that ego gives you a chance to be heard. If your ego is big enough and you show self-confidence, someone is going to give you a shot. When you can control that ego, you're in good shape. I controlled my ego most of my life, but there was a point in my life when I thought I was the greatest drummer in the world. Oh, yeah! You couldn't tell me I wasn't! That was in the late '60s. By this time, I was doing Aretha Franklin—"Respect" and all that. When I walked into a place it was, "Well, I'm Bernard Purdie." [does a double take] "You don't know me? What do you mean, you don't know me?" Well, at that time my name was not on the back of the albums. I'd say, "Hey man, I drummed for Aretha Franklin, James Brown, and King Curtis!" I'd go down the line.
CF: Did you make many enemies in the business with your ego when it was out of control?
BP: I don't think so. I was a little dumb with mine. I didn't have the problem with musicians as much as with women. I had money, so that made me tall, dark, and handsome! [laughs] So a woman I had known for a lot of years—and she really was a good friend—finally said one day, "Purdie, I am so *tired* of you. Your ego is so big and so bad that it stinks!" I said, "What are you talking about?" She said, "Everything you say is I, I, me, me: I did this; I did that." And I said, "But you asked me ..." "No!" she said. *"Nobody* asked you anything!" And that was the first time I understood what an ego was about. When she finished with me, I was cut down to nothing, but I innocently had not known. That was when 1 realized what was what and

started changing. And it took years; it didn't happen overnight. I had to change my ways.

CF: You were talking earlier about studio musicians being hired to play on the records for a lot of English groups in the early '60s. In other interviews, you've said that you played drums for The Who, The Monkees, The Rolling Stones, The Animals. What did you play for The Animals? Did you play on "House Of The Rising Sun"?

BP: I'm not sure if I actually did that one or if I just fixed part of that one. That was what was happening. I was fixing most of the things I played on. A lot of it was keeping tempos together. I would find the middle of the road for the song, and play over or under those quarter notes if they weren't on time.

CF: You've made the very controversial claim that you played drums on 21 early Beatles tracks. Millions of people saw Ringo Starr in live performances, and also the drummers in some of the other groups you've mentioned, and they say they could play. How do you explain that?

BP: First, ask yourself *when* you heard those drummers playing live. There are groups I played for that had great drummers, especially in their maturity. But they were young and inexperienced when they started out, and they needed help. Also, remember: A record is scrutinized much more than a live performance and by a lot more people. It's got to be good. On stage, there's so much sound that it's very difficult to pick out an individual performance. You're listening to the total sound.

CF: You've said you were paid to keep your mouth shut about playing on The Beatles songs. If so, why haven't you?

BP: I thought 15 years was sufficient.

CF: Why won't you disclose the names of The Beatles songs you played on to strengthen your story?

BP: I have finally been approached by their people, and for the first time, they're talking about the possibility of doing it right, one way or the other.

CF: Do you want the story told fully, or do you just want more money?

BP: Well, see, it's not even about that now. It's the *way* they would like to have it. The controversy now is Ringo. Ringo really can't be hurt, no matter what. He's got everything he needs. It's all an ego thing for him; that's what it boils down to. That doesn't bother me, basically. Now, it's time for me to be compensated, and that's what I'm waiting for.

CF: How are you going to be compensated?

BP: There's a book in the works. I have been approached about it.

CF: This would be your own book?

BP: Yes. That's where I'll tell everything.

CF: Don't you have any qualms about that? To some people, to say Ringo didn't play the drums is like saying there is no Santa Claus. Don't you think it makes you look like the bad guy, even if it is the truth?

BP: Not really. The truth is never bad. It's about time they gave credit where credit is due. That's how I feel about it. You know, I've been threatened, because I've said he did not do all the drumming in those early songs. I've messed over some people's idol, I guess.

CF: Fans have threatened your life?

BP: Oh, yeah. I got a call a few years ago, about 1980, when this whole thing was really coming out. This radio station wanted to know if I would go on the air and talk about it via telephone. Well, I did. Five minutes after I hung up, I got this call, and this guy told me I was a dead .... [pauses] Well, besides being a dead nigger, there were a few other words he used. And by the next morning, he was putting out a contract on my life for telling these lies, because I upset his kids. They were crying and ready to kill themselves because of what I said about Ringo, and this man was ready to kill *me.* I asked him, "You want to hurt me because I said something about their idol? I think your kids have a problem. You better check out your kids and not worry about me, because you're going to find out a lot more in the next few years and then what's going to happen to them? You better start preparing them for some letdowns about some of these people they call idols."

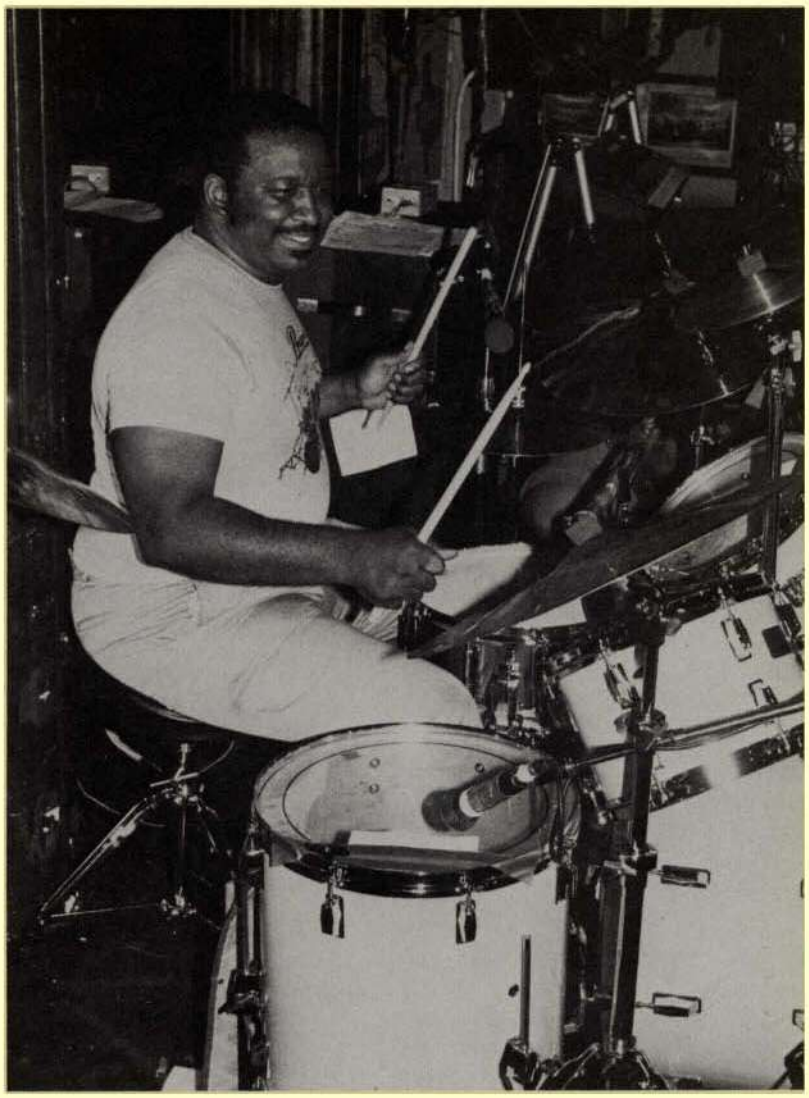

Photo by Ebet Roberts

CF: Have you had bad feelings from people other than fans—people in the music business?

BP: Oh, yeah. I've had problems with some producers. I guess you'd call it blackballing. But that's okay. I'm still working, because I do the job. I'm not trying to steal any thunder from anybody. But if doing my job puts somebody else in a bad light, there's nothing I can do about that. My job comes first.

CF: Has this practice of "ghost-drumming" you describe continued into the '70s and '80s?

BP: Yes. There are times, I don't care who you are—even a good drummer in an established group—when you can't get a sound they want on a record. Maybe you just don't come up to the particular thing they're looking for. Maybe you've got the flu, and they need to cut the song that day.

Take Steely Dan, for example. Steely Dan would cut their records four or five times with four or five different drummers. Now, I was fortunate. After they had cut *Aja* four or five times, when they came to me, I just did what they wanted. It was that simple. The other drummers were good, but Steely Dan was looking for a sound that I could do, and they could afford to experiment until they found it. It didn't matter. The record company knew that, if they spent a million dollars for that album, they were still going to make five million.

CF: You have been the drummer on an amazing number of hits through the

continued on page 34

Photo by Michael Jachles

THE SIGNAT

BOBBY CHOUINARD

by Teri Saccone

THE sonic hurricane of the Billy Squier sound and fury swirls with lacerating leads, omnipotent vocals and, in the eye of the storm, the primitive power rendered by drummer Bobby Chouinard. Favoring fire and soul over flash and technique, Chouinard's rhythmic exploits are raunchy, raw, and passionate. With the interplay between drums and guitar in the Squier sound being symbiotic in nature, the songs are structured with an interdependence on both elements: Where there's a wailing guitar lick, you 're bound to hear a thunderous drum attack. Classic tracks like "Lonely Is The Night, " "Don't Say No," "The Stroke," and "Emotions In Motion" typify Chouinard's heavy-bottomed style, where hypnotic swells build in momentum and intensity. Although Bobby commented that he feels "very proud to be part of the Billy Squier sound, " after hearing the two of them together, it's pretty evident that Squier is also a very large part of Bobby Chouinard's sound, as well.

*Hailing from the Boston suburb of Brockton, Massachusetts, Chouinard was born on June 26, 1953. With little more than three years of practice and garage-band experience under his belt, young Bobby ventured out on the local club circuit, gigging regularly by the ripe old age of 14. After migrating to New York City in the mid-'70s, he eventually joined forces with another ex-Bostonite, singer-songwriter-guitarist Billy Squier. Chouinard lent a hand in forming Squier's present band, and since its inception in 1980 and with the subsequent release of four LPs (*Tale Of The Tape, Don't Say No, Emotions In Motion, *and* Signs Of *Life), the group has tasted almost universal success.*

Chain-smoking and clutching a can of Coca-Cola—*"It's the best thing to have when you just wake up," he advises—Bobby was relaxed, informal, and sometimes irreverant in his views on practicing, preparation, and technical facility, but always humorous and insightful. He only had one request. The day I arrived at his home for the interview was the afternoon following the Hagler-Hearns title bout, and Bobby, a sports enthusiast, asked me, "Could you mention that I went to high school with Marvin Hagler? He's a great guy, and it would be really nice if you could mention it in the article."*

TS: After playing with Billy Squier for five years, how has your role changed and developed?

BC: I like to consider that I'm part of the Billy Squier sound and the whole signature of it. Billy writes around his strengths, and one of his strengths is the drums. So, when he writes a song, he writes particularly with drums in mind. Billy is probably the best drummer I know who doesn't, and really can't, play the drums. I'm just very proud to be part of it all.

It must have been six years ago when I first played with Billy, and I immediately knew that he was going to be a star. It was just a matter of getting the right collection of musicians together and then making the right record. I brought Doug Lubahn [bass] and Jeff Golub [guitar] into the band, and I'm kind of the leader of the group in the sense of seniority.

It's kind of a rags-to-riches story, because we really started from scratch. There was no band except Billy and myself in the beginning. Billy had been in a group called Piper, which had put out a few albums that hadn't been very successful. Once you release a couple of albums that haven't sold well, record companies tend to consider you to be damaged goods. Since Piper hadn't made any money for A&M Records, Billy hadn't been recording for a couple of years when he finally got his own project off the ground. He was writing songs during the interim, but he didn't have a record deal. When he decided to split with Piper to get his own band together, he knew that he wanted to make it his trip. He writes and sings everything. The group of musicians on his original demo were Andy Newmark, Bob Kulick, and John Siegler, and on the strength of that demo, he was eventually signed by Capitol. Brian May was supposed to produce the first album, but because of scheduling problems, he couldn't do it. Eddie Offord was brought in to replace him. For some reason—maybe they didn't think it was worth their while or they just lost interest while Billy shopped for a deal—the original group of musicians who did the demo didn't want to be on the album, *Tale Of The Tape.* Anyway, now Billy finally had a record deal after two years of sitting around, but he had no band. He ran into my roommate, who was a promotion man at R.S.O. records, at a club called Trax. My roommate suggested that Billy see me for an audition. I had been playing in a band called Pierce Arrow at the time, and I had known Billy a little bit in Boston. He had transplanted himself in New York after realizing that he wasn't going to make it in the business with Boston as his home base. I had also come to New York for basically the same reason, and we had both been scrounging around, doing what we had to do to survive.

Pierce Arrow consisted of Doug Lubahn, Jeff Kent, Robin Batteau, David Bushkin, Werner Fritching, and myself. John Scher was our manager and the original idea was that we were going to be an East Coast type of Toto—a real musician's band. It sounded good on paper, but because there were so many writers in the band, there was no genuine direction at all. After we had done three albums on Columbia Records, which were all disasters, the band folded.

When I went down to audition for Billy, it was just me and him—a set of drums, and a guitar and amp. He had a demo cassette of "The Big Beat," which he put on for about 25 seconds. I said, "Okay, turn the tape off. I'm ready." So I got up on the drums and started hitting the bass drum. The sound just flew across the room. Billy said, "You've got the job," because I hit really hard and that was the sound he was looking for. We've been together and best friends ever since.

TS: Naturally, your role has changed within the framework of the

Photos by Michael Jachles

band during that time.

BC: I think we've got to go back to using the drums as the signature of the sound, which is something we've gotten away from. I haven't actually heard any of the new songs that we're going to be doing for the next record, but we've been talking about it and we realize that we've come full circle. The drums have remained a staple of the sound, but as for the actual playing, 1 think it's become a bit too musical for its own good. I think it has to do with where Billy's priorities have shifted, the type of songs he's been writing, and what he's trying to say. That's not to say that this was good or bad, but he's coming back to what we initially sounded like. The drums and the entire sound will probably get a lot nastier. I can't wait.

It's funny. When *Don't Say No,* which is a fine album, came out, it was really hip to like Billy Squier. Once we became a success, it was hip not to like us, which, essentially, is human nature. A lot of people complained that the last record, *Signs Of Life,* was a wrong move career-wise because it transformed us from a legitimate rock band to a Rick Springfield thing. We lost a certain amount of credibility and respect because of the video for "Rock Me Tonight." It was criticized because people didn't want to see Billy rolling around on satin sheets instead of playing the guitar. I do know that we are all sincere about whatever it is we do. We just make the songs sound the best we can. And if I don't like the song, I'll be the first one to tell Billy, because I'm his biggest fan and his best critic. I guess I'm sort of a barometer.

TS: How much creative input do you inject?

Photo by Lissa Wales

BC: We all contribute. It's really about as democratic as you can get. Let's say that something bothers you about a song. Well, it's one thing to say, "That part stinks," but that is not the way to go about it. If you say, "I don't like that part, but try this," it's a more positive way to offer criticism.

TS: So you make suggestions about all the aspects of a song, not just in regard to the drumming, right?

BC: The way we go about it is Billy plays the songs for us on his acoustic guitar at the rehearsals. The whole band just sits in a circle listening. First of all, I totally remove myself from being a member of the band and try to hear the songs like a fan would. If I wasn't into the music, I just couldn't give my best performance. Then, we might make suggestions about cutting verses in half if they're too long, or putting the guitar solo in the best place, changing a keyboard part, or maybe instead of using 8ths on the hi-hats, trying quarters. We end up spending a considerable amount of time in preproduction, because no matter how good it sounds in the rehearsal studio, once you do get into the recording studio, some things won't translate well on tape.

So, it may sound great in rehearsal, but for some reason, it's a lot easier to change things when you know exactly what you're doing, rather than fumbling through unfamiliar material. It's all pretty much planned out when it comes to choosing what cymbal I'll be using or when I'm going to hit the bell. If something isn't working well, it's a lot easier to say, "Stay on the hi-hat during the guitar solo as opposed to hitting a cymbal," but if you weren't aware that you had planned to use a cymbal during that guitar solo, then you're in big trouble. Of course, there's a large emphasis on spontaneity as well. I can walk in the studio after being up for a couple of days or something, and end up doing my best work by accident. Some things we've done were unintentional—largely mistakes that sounded great but never would have been attempted normally.

TS: Can you remember a particular song or fill that came about accidentally?

BC: For instance, on "Everybody Wants You," during the last verse of the song, I lost concentration and I put a fill in where I thought the last verse was going to start, but in fact, it was a double riff. It ended up being a fill into the next verse, while everybody else was still on the riff. We said, "Wow, that sounds kind of neat. Leave it in." Circumstances like that are really fun.

TS: With Billy most definitely being the center of attention, or the star, as you put it, is your self-expression ever hindered?

BC: I believe that, no matter who you work with, you earn your own space. I mean, sure, it's not the Billy Squier Band. It's Billy Squier. He's the front man. He writes and sings all the songs, yet you earn your own niche in the band. It's up to you to command the role you're going to play, and I look upon it as a concept rather

"NO MATTER WHO YOU WORK WITH, YOU EARN YOUR OWN SPACE."

than a challenge. Billy said that he looks to me as his Clarence demons. When people think of our music, they think of the banter between us. It's an incredible responsibility to have, but it's easy because that's what I do anyway, so I didn't have to think about it.

TS: Have you ever done any songwriting?

BC: I've never written a song in my life, so I wouldn't really know how to go about it. I'm not really a lyrical kind of person anyway. I'm more into riffs, melodies, grooves, changes, and feels. To get back to the band, Billy has never been given enough credit for his lyrics. What he's saying is pretty clever in that you can take his lyrics any number of ways, and I think that's wonderful. Music is an art, and art is in the eye of the beholder. Many of his songs have a double *entendre.* He says a lot of things tongue-in-cheek, but he's very clever about it. You can look at the words on a surface level, or you can read into it more deeply. I don't actually write songs or lyrics, but there's an art to making a song sound as good as it potentially can, and that's what I look upon my contribution as.

TS: When you go into the studio, how are the tracks recorded? Do you usually go in and lay down the drum tracks first?

BC: We all play together. Aside from *Tale Of The Tape,* for the last three albums that we've done, all five of us have been in the studio together. It's practically the same situation as our rehearsals, and for us, it's the most comfortable way of doing it. We seem to get the best performance overall, and the result lacks the sterility that's often associated with recording instruments separately. I don't even use a click track. For this band, working in this manner seems to be the best way to go. I'm not saying that using click tracks or overdubbing is a negative thing. I've had the experience of working outside of this band for other artists where I have done things via their system, which is fine. When I played on Ted Nugent's last record, I used a click track through everything and found it was a great learning experience. It was especially a surprise to me, because I wasn't expecting to use one on such a hard rock album like that one.

TS: Was that your first experience with playing alongside a click?

BC: Occasionally, I had used one in the past to do various projects, but I had never worked with one on an entire album. It took me a while to forget about it when I used it on Ted's album. Once you start to play with a click, you've got to get it out of your mind. If you are conscious of the click and play to it, it's going to *sound* like you played to it. In the beginning, I fought it tooth and nail. I just didn't like it at all. I was getting nervous—the whole bit. It took a couple of passes through for me to get used to it, but after a while, it became almost a part of the band.

TS: Earlier, you spoke about Billy's ability to write numbers around the strength of the drums. Does he generate patterns for you, or does he give you a general idea of what he wants you to play?

BC: Sometimes, he'll write a drum pattern as the hook of the song, which is neat. He's very creative as far as drum parts go. He hears things in his head, but he can't actually play the ideas out for me on drums. When he tries to play, I wince, because it reminds me of fingers running down a blackboard. But what's really important is that he has his own specific ideas, which he explains to me.

TS: If he can't actually play, how does he communicate his ideas to you?

BC: I know what he wants, because he'll explain things verbally, or on occasion, he'll sit behind the kit and attempt to bang it out roughly. A lot of times, what he wants is what I would have played anyway. It's always easier if he comes in with a basic notion of what kind of beat he wants, because he's lived with these songs in his mind for such a long time that he's looking at the track in a far larger scope.

TS: There's sort of a dialogue going between you and Billy on

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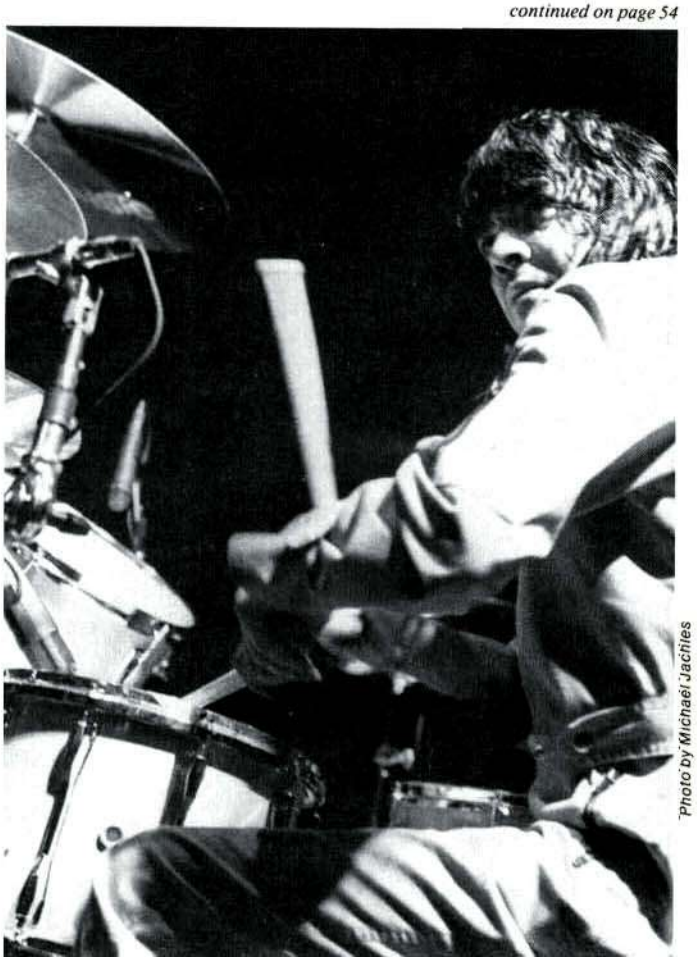

Photo by Michael Jachles

THIS is my second interview with Ed Soph for MD. *My first interview was completed and accepted for publication about seven years ago. MD was a quarterly magazine back then, and before Ed's interview could be published, a significant part of it had become outdated.*

At that time, Ed's primary reputation was that of a premier big band drummer. He'd been in the North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band, on the road briefly with Stan Kenton, and on the road and on records with Woody Herman. Back in the early '70s, Ed showed up on Bill Watrous's Manhattan Wildlife Refuge *big band album, which was acclaimed by critics, listeners, and musicians. He also spent some years with Clark Terry's Big Bad Band, and with his small groups touring and recording.*

The Ed Soph I interviewed seven years ago was in a transitional period. He seemed to be doing all of the right things necessary for prime recognition as a performing artist. He was a first-class drummer playing with first-class musicians in first-class bands. Instead of forging ahead on that path, Ed decided to give up that grind. He was pleased with the recognition he received as a superb big band drummer, but he was displeased with the fact that many people thought that was all he was capable of.

Ed Soph is not a recluse. He may be more visible now than when he was on the road with bands, but the majority of his time is devoted to teaching. He performs numerous clinics for both Yamaha and Jamey Aebersold, worldwide. He and Horacee Arnold, in collaboration with Yamaha, recorded an educational video called The Drums: A Musical Approach. *When he's at home in Connecticut, Ed teaches privately at home and at Creative Music in Wethersfield. Together with Bob Breithaupt and Guy Remonko, Ed holds an intensive yearly drum symposium at Ohio University. If you've been reading* MD *for a few years, Ed's name will be familiar through the fine popular articles he has contributed to the* Driver's Seat *and Jazz* Drummers Workshop *columns. He is also an editor for the Percussive Arts Society magazine.*

Fortunately, I was able to follow up on the best questions from my first interview with Ed, and they're included here. Ed Soph is a rare combination. He's an expert drummer in all areas and a master at communicating his knowledge to others.

SF: How can you teach somebody to evoke emotion on a drumset?

by Scott K. Fish

ED SOPH IDEALIST

Photo by Lissa Wales

ES: You can't. Teachers do only one thing: get the students to think for themselves, so that they can unlock what they have inside them. Students sit there as if they had padlocks on their brains. Teachers sit there with big rings loaded with keys, and keep trying keys until they find something that opens the locks. Then, they say, "Goodbye. You've got it. You understand. Go."

I've never questioned, and have never really been interested in, somebody's motives for wanting to play. When I was starting, I didn't even think about it. It was fun. Coming from an environment where I was exposed to music at a very early age, it seemed natural to want to play *something.* I never even thought about saying, "I want to be a drummer." I just kept doing it.

SF: I'm thinking about the development of a very high level of musical communication. For example, 1 read a Joe Zawinul interview where he related some of the horrors he felt growing up in war-torn Austria. Months later, at a Weather Report concert, I heard Zawinul play a solo keyboard piece without mentioning the title. What he was playing conjured up feelings and images of his Austrian childhood. When the piece was over, Zawinul announced the title, and it *was* in reference to his childhood.

ES: You hear classical people say that you must *sing* on any instrument—that you must evoke the quality of the voice. Okay, great. But people have to find that out for themselves. Otherwise, you're talking dictator time. You're talking control. Besides, if teachers could do that, everyone would sound the same. Everyone would know how to express emotions the same way. Unfortunately, some people think that teachers are supposed to do that. People say, "Well, being a teacher is so frustrating." Bullshit! Realize what your job is. You're simply there for one reason. You have more experience—more channels that you can draw upon. You've got a kid sitting there who's 12 or 13 years old. You're 40 years old. You've got *that* much experience. The kid has *zero.* You funnel your experience in and see how much, if any, of it helps the student. If you see something that helps, you follow that line of thought until you reach the point where you say, "I could give you more exercises, but that's not going to make you a better player. The only thing that's going to make you a better player is for you to get out there and play." That's how you learn to play—just by playing. You go to a teacher if you have a technical problem or a head problem. But teachers are superfluous.

I ran into Papa Jo Jones a long time ago in Frank Ippolito's old shop on 8th Avenue. I said, "Gee, Mr. Jones. I sure would like to get a drum lesson from you." He said, "If you want a drum lesson from me, come up to such-and-such a club. I'm playing there every night." I thought, "Soph, you dummy!" Those guys didn't go to teachers. They went to clubs and watched the cats play. That's gone now. How many kids can afford to go to that club in New York that charged $17 to hear Chick Corea, Roy Haynes, and Miroslav Vitous? Then there was a $10 drink minimum. If you've got to pay parking on top of that, come on!

SF: They pay that kind of money to hear rock bands.

ES: But those kids aren't there to learn how to play drums. How can they be if they're in a 10,000-seat auditorium? You'll learn more listening to the record! I'm talking about going to a club, getting into the Peanut Gallery like they used to have at Birdland, just sitting there, and checking somebody out. Go to the Vanguard early, get right back there by the drums, and watch Elvin. That's the learning opportunity right there. But times have changed. It's not happening anymore like it was. Can you wonder why people get discouraged? It would be nice if they'd give a concert in the afternoon. In the old days, clubs used to have matinees for kids or musicians who were working at night. That gap will never be filled. Can you imagine going into a club and watching Sid Catlett, Dave Tough, or Tiny Kahn, or just going down and listening to Mel Lewis play?

You or I could take a kid—and I'm not making a value judgment—who is into Eric Carr, Neil Peart, or Alan White, and we could say to this kid, "Have you ever

Photo by Lissa Wales

seen Elvin Jones play drums?" *"Who?"* "Come here, kid. You're coming with me tonight." You could sit that kid down at the Vanguard, and the child's mouth would be on the floor after the first chorus, simply because the kid had never been exposed to it.

SF: Of all of the world's drum students, what percentage do you feel are *seriously* studying the drumset?

ES: One percent. That's the way it is in any field. As a teacher, I try to go in with an open mind. 1 learned a long time ago that it's wrong to sit with a student and think, "You lazy bum," or "You no-talent so-and-so." All you're accomplishing when you do that, by the very nature of your reaction, is putting up walls that will prevent you from communicating with that person. 1 also learned that, when it comes to passing judgment, like "Hey, kid. Be a plumber," I've been dead *wrong* every time.

All you can do is try to motivate students. It's not what you have to *teach* them. It's how you *motivate* them, so that they can take your material and do something with it. Give them a degree of self-awareness, so that they can solve their own problems. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. It's a two-way street. I have to motivate, and the students, as well, have to have some self-motivation. In most cases, it's not really that they lack motivation. They just have a very shallow knowledge of what drumming is all about, because of articles that they read and industry advertisements that suggest that drums are not serious. Can you imagine violin ads like drum ads? Can you see Pinkas Zukerman in an ad saying, "I play the new Strad-6 electronic blah-blah, because it makes me play faster and louder"?

The old adage of "Get Johnny a drum. *Anyone* can be a drummer," has really come true in a lot of respects. The majority of kids don't want to know about how much work it is to learn the instrument. That's why you only get one percent. It boils down to intelligence, too—the ability of the kid to look ahead and think, "If I practice these sticking patterns four hours a day for the next six months, I will get better," instead of, "Well, show me the beat that so-and-so played on such-and-such album." Instant gratification—it's just like those idiots who advertise in *MD.* "Quick Results!" That has *nothing* to do with learning how to play the drums.

SF: Do you feel that *MD* is on the right track?

ES: I really don't know. *Modern Drummer,* in a lot of ways, is like reading *LIFE* magazine, in that, on one page in *LIFE* you have a picture of some piteously starving child. Turn the page, and there's an ad for a washing machine. In *MD,* you'll have a really good article dealing with basics that everyone should know, at least to *begin* playing the instrument well, like Nick Forte's series on learning how to read notes. Then you turn the page, and there's some idiot saying, "I can't read. I'm self-taught, and I crack at least 16 cymbals a night." I don't know what *MD's* credo is. Are they there as an educational magazine? Are they there as entertainment? Are they there as a pipeline for the industry? What is their purpose?

"THE MAJORITY OF KIDS DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT HOW MUCH WORK IT IS TO LEARN THE INSTRUMENT."

What I *like* about MD—even though it has changed drastically, looking over past issues—is that, in terms of content, it reflects the times, which is important. You still get good articles, and you still get good interviews with people who can play. That doesn't immediately mean that I'm talking about jazz players. I'm talking about good rock 'n' roll players like Charlie Watts, Steve Gadd, Harvey Mason and people like that. No matter what your style is, you can be a musician. It's the drummers-of-the-moment that 1 can't stand, but I understand that *MD* has to do that. They're in business. As long as they try to balance it with some intelligent material, well, then I'm happy, because there's something for me to read.

SF: You originally moved to Connecticut to teach at the University of Bridgeport. Why did you leave U.B.?

ES: I left to concentrate on teaching. When I was there, I was *trying* to teach, but the students were terrible. They really had no desire to work. They wanted to learn the latest licks, but they had no desire to sit down and really learn the instrument. It wasn't worth my time, so I got involved in doing lots of clinics with Jamey Aebersold and individual things with Yamaha. By teaching privately, I could really find out who wants to study with me. My students are not under any grade-point requirement. I'm very fortunate in teaching privately. There's not one student who I'm not proud of. They all work.

That brings up a second problem. Let's say you have students who find themselves learning and excelling on the instrument. What the hell are they going to do? There are no gigs. Their concerns are, basically, making a living playing their drums, and doing something they enjoy. They are, for the most part, young people who have grown out of the stage of imitating some other drummer, where they realize that they have the potential of their own individuality on the instrument. What worries them is whether or not they will be able to reach that potential as an individual, be it in jazz, rock, or anything else. They don't want to play in situations where they are forced to sound like someone else, as in a Top-40 group, and/or any situation where they're forced to play in some way that goes against their own artistic intent. That's totally unrealistic. They're very idealistic at this point, which is great. The fact that they have that concern is very important.

SF: Do you think it's wise to be so idealistic that you refuse to learn how to play certain styles of music?

ES: No, I don't. I can say that, because I used to think that way. Any gig can be good, even if it's good only to the extent that you find out that you never want to play that type of gig again. Everything must be tried. It's all attitude. What my students are saying, what I'm saying, and what I think any drummer/musician who has aspirations to better himself/herself on the instrument is saying is that we don't want to do that as a steady diet. My students don't want that to be their musical life-style. They want that, perhaps, to subsidize what they do. It's idealistic, but it's very important. If people didn't think that way, there would never be any changes in the music or the instrument.

SF: In 1978, you said that "going out on

the road with Stan Kenton was a sobering experience from the ivory-tower world of school." Can you explain why?

ES: I went on the road with Kenton in '65. In school, I was top dog, playing in the One O'clock Band. Living was no problem. I split the rent on a little house with another guy. It cost me $27.50 a month. It was great. You didn't have to deal with drunk musicians and weird people. I realized then that there was more to being a musician than just playing music—that there were certain advantages and disadvantages of life-style. There was the realization that, if one thought in terms of security, one better think in terms of security other than financial or material. The first security had to come from knowing that what you did as a musician was good and right, and it made other people feel good. Hopefully, you would be able to make a decent living from that. I came to the realization that being a musician is not easy.

That first time on the road with Kenton, I was only out about four to six weeks. After being on the road that short amount of time, I realized that I needed to learn an awful lot more in terms of playing experience and in how to deal with people. It's one thing to deal with your peers in school. It's another to relate to, say, a neurotic brass section of road musicians. I'm not placing myself above them by saying that. But in any big band there are personality conflicts and problems. At North Texas, there were those problems, but we weren't on a bus together. At North Texas, we were together an hour a day for five days a week. That was it.

SF: You graduated North Texas with an English degree. Did you have as much chance to study drumset there as you wanted to?

ES: No. I only studied drumset for my first year with Tommy Gwin. I was there for five years because I switched majors. The teacher they hired after Tommy could teach drumset, but all the set drummers who had studied with Tommy could carve this cat up.

SF: What was your musical involvement at North Texas as an English major?

ES: I played. Someone could say, "Why go to a university and pay to play?" I don't know where else you could go and play in a good big band for five years, and get that experience without the outside pressures of the real world on you, and where you have no other responsibilities other than to learn your instrument. I got on Woody Herman's band through North Texas. It was, and still is, like a farm school. The sad thing about some of the institutions is that they've gotten so large that the quality of instruction has gone to pot. But in a way that's good. Those who are meant to be good will be *twice* as good, because of what they have to fight against.

The young drummers who are coming up today are more widely based than their predecessors. They have more to draw upon, simply because, by going to a university, they have studied music and percussion. That's not to say that someone like Baby Dodds or Sid Catlett was an ignoramus. I don't mean that. I mean that the resources we have to study from today—as opposed to before—have been consolidated and centralized in the university, so that someone like Peter Erskine can go to Indiana and study with someone like George Gaber. Kenny Aronoff, who is a great timpanist, can study at Tanglewood, but he ends up playing with John Cougar. It's things like this that the little kids watching MTV don't know and *should* know. Kenny Aronoff has a good, deep background as a musician. He's not just up there banging away, and he's not, simply, *thai* kind of drummer, any more than Elvin Jones can only play triplets.

But the players today like Erskine, Aronoff, Steve Houghton, and Greg Bissonette weren't hurt by going to a university. And again, we're dealing with extremes. There are people who say—as I said one time—"You don't have to go to school to learn how to play drums." And you don't! It's just a matter of what your priorities and needs are. Some people get structured by going to New York, hanging out, and studying privately. Knowing what a university offers, if you feel it's going to help you, go. If you don't feel it's going to help you, *don't go.*

SF: In your private teaching practice, do you work from any specific method books?

ES: Ted Reed's *Syncopation* and Stone's *Stick Control.* Some people think that books in themselves are an end, and that one can learn to play the instrument by learning those books. Maybe that's why there are teachers. Books give people different vocabularies to work with. Then, someone has to come in—to draw a very bad simile—and teach the pronunciation of that vocabulary. If students can't play a particular lick in a rock book, they don't know *why* they can't play it. First, they are going to say it's too hard, that the book's no good, or that they need new foot pedals. The last thing they think about is that they can't move a certain way so as to produce that certain pattern. They are simply concerned with the end result: the *sound.* They are not aware of what produces the sound, which is the *motion.* That leads me into the videotape that Horacee Arnold and I did. We deliberately addressed motion studies, and with the video, you can show them. The tape is called *Drumset: A Musical Approach.* It's like condensing a whole lifetime of study into a two-hour overview, starting with grips, basic stroke types, and accent technique. Once one has established a basic technique on one surface, we address ways of moving it to the drumset. We've also included brief histories of rock 'n' roll and jazz drumming, with examples, and a discography and bibliography. People aren't going to buy this because it's Ed Soph and Horacee Arnold. They're going to buy it because they're going to *learn* something from it. There has to be more done with drummers from a motion standpoint, rather than simply an exercise standpoint. There's too much learning through the eyes and not enough learning through the ears. There has to be more done relating to the body and how it works. I just don't think books

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Photo by Lissa Wales

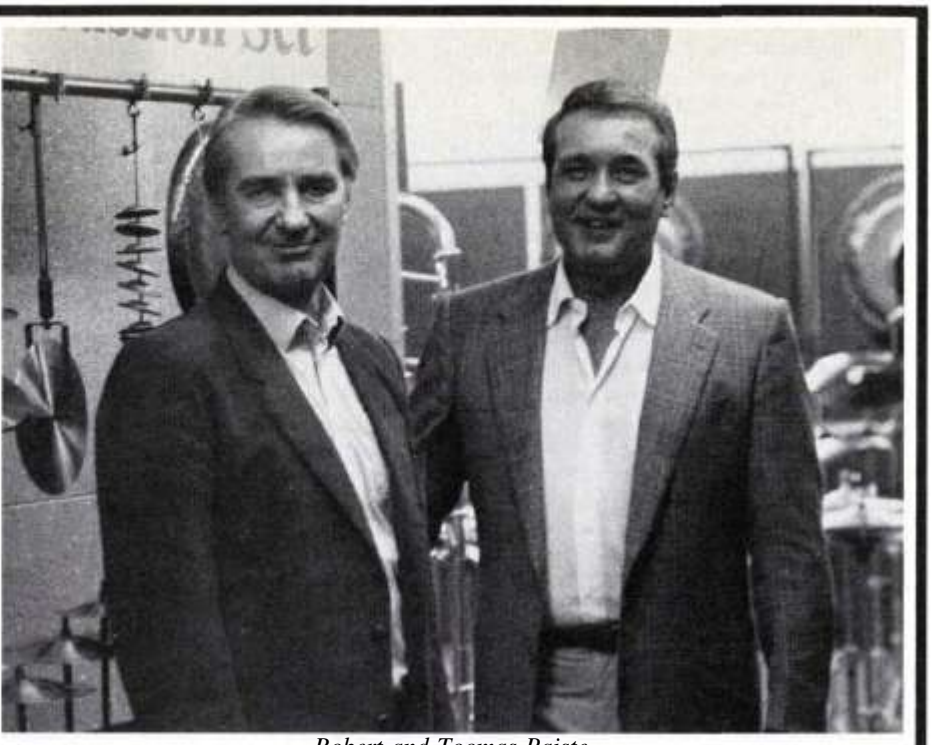
by Robyn Flans

ONE must admire a company that withstands the chaos of a revolution and a raging world war. Sound dramatic? Perhaps, but it happens to be true of the company that was begun by Michael Paiste as a wholesale operation for East Northern Europe at the turn of the century in Estonia. This company was certainly a far cry from the Paiste we know today, but in addition to selling records, record players, and some musical instruments, Michael was making some hand cymbals. In 1918, however, business was upset by the revolution in which Estonia declared its independence from Russia. (Estonia remained an independent country until 1940, when it was taken over by Russia once again.) The family moved from one place to another, and one son, also named Michael, who had been at military school outside St. Petersberg, was separated from his family until their return seven years later. As fate would have it, though, during that separation, he had been to such places as China and Japan, and having been exposed to different musics, he became more interested in the cymbal and gong aspect of the family business.

When Michael took over the business in 1928, his objective became to improve his father's inferior cymbals. When World War II began in 1939, however, the family moved to Poland, where work was impossible for the first two years. In 1945, Michael Paiste arrived in Northern Germany with his wife and two sons, Robert and Toomas. In 1956, although the Germany plant was retained, the Paistes decided to make Switzerland their home, due to its political neutrality.

"There is a point I must bring up," Toomas Paiste asserts. "In Poland, of course, and after the war in Germany, Father was not able to get top materials. Central European industry was actually destroyed, and there was just no way to get the top materials he wanted or needed, so it was destiny. He had to refine the methods, so he could make good sound out of inferior materials. In '57, when we had the right material, we just applied the same methods, but the basics of the production never changed. I'm not saying that tradition should be unquestioned, but I think tradition is a value of past knowledge, and you should apply it to whatever new times you're in. To do something just to be faster or quicker is not the answer. But now we're touching the basic philosophy that also came from Father. He always believed we weren't making our product for anybody but the drummer. No matter how much advertising you do or what nice stories you write, if in the end the drummer is not satisfied, you've failed."

In 1963, Michael Paiste died, and Robert and Toomas took over the Paiste legacy. According to Toomas, it was the natural course of events, just as his son Eric and Robert's son Robbie have become involved in the family business. "When I was about 16 or 17, I thought I might do something else," Toomas admits. "I was interested in biology and science, but I think, at that age, you have lots of ideas of what you want to do. Our parents never put any type of psychological pressure on us to go on with the business, though."



Robert and Toomas Paiste

Toomas and Robert are as different as night and day. While Toomas automatically gravitated towards more administrative functions, Robert cultivated his production skills. Toomas explains: "We found the areas we were best in, and by knowing that, we developed in that direction. Nowadays, we can say that the two halves are a whole. What is different between us? It's probably just easier for me to be outside than for him. Robert likes to go into the details of things, really diving into the problems and trying to solve them very methodically. That's a perfect attitude for sound development—being very critical and going into all these things. I am more of a person who is interested in many, many things, and has no urge to really go into detail with any one of those. I'm being quite the professional gypsy nowadays, and it's fun. It gives me a very good feeling to know that, while I am somewhere in the world, Robert is at home taking care of that part of the business. Robert has the same feeling. He sits there and works on another new development, knowing I am taking care of the rest of the business. We balance each other really well."

In 1981, it was Toomas who oversaw the beginnings of Paiste America. As early as 1932, Paiste cymbals had been distributed in America by the Ludwig Drum Company (and later by CBS) but, as Toomas explains, "There's a big difference between having a distributor and having your own people thinking about that product from morning to evening, 100%. We didn't move away from our distributors with any bad feelings. It was just that we decided that, if we wanted to really do the job, we had to do it ourselves."

Now, Toomas no longer handles the day-to-day work, since he is more involved in imparting the Paiste philosophy to company people. "It was a necessity for me to stop being in the administration, because how could I do that? I was in Switzerland, Germany, and America. 1 couldn't take the work with me, so I actually had to delegate important parts and find good people to do it.

"The company's philosophy was a logical step beyond what Father did before," Toomas explains. "He had this philosophy, although it was not defined in a way that could be passed on to people. It was this inner understanding of how to do things. From the very beginning, whether it was in Estonia, during the war in Poland, or later on in Germany, he always had contact with musicians. He wanted to know what they needed to have in order to express themselves in music, so he made the instruments accordingly. Basically, all of that is still going on, on a much greater scale, of course. We now have a large nutn-

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A VISIT TO THE PAISTE FACTORY

by Simon Goodwin

"We don't think of ourselves as producers in the normal sense of the word. We don't produce a product or an article. What we are making here is *sound.* The cymbals we make are a means to that end. Sound is what we are producing and that is what drummers are buying in the end. That is what they need to express themselves, their feelings, and their creativity within the music. They are the only ones who can tell us what we are looking for. We are able to make *any* sound, but there are endless possibilities; so we always need to learn from them what they want and what they need."

When Robert Paiste talks about cymbals, you listen. We know that there are very few manufacturers of top-quality handmade cymbals. We also know that the people who really understand the process at every stage and level of production, and who have been using that knowledge for 30 years or more to develop the sounds that are so important to all drummers and percussionists can be counted on the fingers of one hand. "We are talking about *musical* sounds, with frequencies from low to high that blend with and enhance each other. There must be no frequencies that stick out from the total and form what I would call a 'disturbing tone,' which distorts the harmony of the overall sound. We consider the musical quality of the sound, but we also consider things like the volume, the power, and the punch. The musicality can come over in a nice, soft way, but it can also come over in a very strong way. It depends on how the *energy* of that sound is coming out of that cymbal. There are many ways to get a musical sound that is just nice and soft and enhancing, and there are many ways to get a sound that is strong, powerful, and cutting. But just because of that power, it doesn't mean that it is losing its basic musicality. Controlling the energy is the secret. How is it done? Didn't I just say it's a secret?" Robert's eyes have an amused twinkle in them, "Come on. Let me show you how we do things here. I'll try to explain on the way."

The Paiste (pronounced *Pie-stee,* by the way) factory is built into a gentle hillside next to a lake at Nottwil, near Luzerne in Switzerland. It is on three levels; the parking area for the production department is actually on the roof of the administration block, and the warehouse and dispatch section is at the lowest level, below the administration. There are two other buildings in the complex: One is the original factory that Paiste had when they located themselves here in 1957 (this is now the engineering section), and the other is Robert Paiste's own house. The main buildings date back to 1966, and the fact that they are bright, airy, and colorful is no accident. "Just as the sounds are our objective," says Robert, "the *people* who help us to produce them are very important. The atmosphere in the factory must be motivating for them to do painstaking work. They are encouraged to take coffee breaks when they feel like it! We don't want people getting tired and making mistakes. That can be too costly. Everything is geared towards getting the best *sound* result."

Production in Switzerland

Paiste cymbals are all made from bronze alloy. There are two types used: The one used for *602* and *Sound Creation* cymbals (which we will refer to as 602 alloy) is 80% copper and 20% tin; the one used for 2002, *Rude, 505,* and *404* cymbals (which we will refer to as 2002 alloy) is 92% copper and 8% tin. Needless to say, these proportions were not settled upon by accident; a great deal of work has gone into research and development over the years. It was Paiste's discovery of the 602 "formula" back in 1957 that enabled the company to enter the marketplace with a top-quality cymbal. However, the proportion of the constituents of the alloy is only a very small part of it. These are the two basic alloys, but the sound potential within a certain alloy can be expanded even further through various techniques used during the casting and rolling processes. Paiste does not do the casting and rolling of the metal itself. The company receives it from its metalworks already formed into plates of appropriate proportions to be turned into cymbals. Robert seemed to take the view that quality control at this stage was such a basic requirement that it was hardly worth commenting on. "Of course, the metal we receive from the works is perfect. They make it to our specifications. They are highly skilled professionals. If anything was wrong, it would soon become apparent, because we work on the metal in certain ways to achieve certain sounds. If this wasn't happening, it would be obvious."

The appearance of these metal plates is interesting. The 2002 plates are smooth with a consistent color that is very similar to the color of the finished cymbal. The 602 plates, on the other hand, have a rough "sandblasted" look about them. The color is uneven. They almost look as if they could be pieces of painted cardboard. It comes down to the fact that the 2002 metal is in a more refined state when it arrives at the Paiste factory, but with the 602s, there is part of the tempering process that they need to do themselves. The plates are passed through an oven—the time and temperature depending on the size of the plate—and then dropped into a tank of water to cool. When they come out, they are a dark charcoal-grey in color, but the object of the procedure is to increase the flexibility for hammering. The cup is

Preparation of the different Cymbal Lines for production (heating and pressing of the cup)

Hammering of the cymbals according to given directions andfirst control

pressed into the plate, and it begins to take on the appearance of a cymbal. At this stage, the hole is also drilled into the center. After it is cleaned, the plate is a dull bronze color and considerably smoother than it was before going into the oven.

Robert Paiste balances one of the pre-oven *602* plates on his finger and strikes it with a drumstick. There is an unmusical clang. He exchanges it for one of the embryonic cymbals, hits it, and the change in sound is quite noticeable. "There," he says, "we are beginning to control the vibrations in the metal, but there is still a long way to go." I remark that 1 have heard finished cymbals (but *not* Paiste, of course) that sound like that. Robert replies that he doesn't like to discuss competitors.

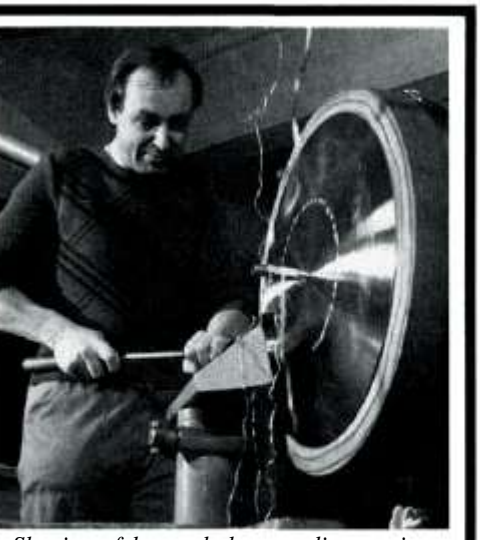
Hand-hammeringforfine tuning and second control

The first stage of treatment for the 2002 plates is much simpler: The smooth, fully tempered metal disc is placed on a template. There is a metal ring a couple of inches above it that is used as a guide for the craftsman to heat the bell area with a blowtorch to soften the metal. After this, the cup is pressed in and the hole is drilled. Both of these jobs are done individually on machines that allow the operator to line up the cymbal while controlling the press and drill himself. The square bells on China-type cymbals are not pressed in, but spun in on a lathe.

As we go on to look at the next stage in the production, Robert explains its importance. "In our cymbal production, we concentrate on handwork, because through the handwork, we are always flexible enough to make any alteration and any change for a new sound or for a new line. It's a classical way of making cymbals—hammering. After that, there is the shaving, which brings the metal down to a certain thickness, depending on whether it is a thin, medium, or heavy cymbal. But the most important process is the hammering. Sound from a cymbal is produced by vibrations. The nature of the vibrations is determined by shape, thickness, and tension. Now the tension in a cymbal is mainly determined by the hammering. If you shape a cymbal without hammering it, you are dealing only with basic tensions that are in the metal after rolling. Pressing just bends the metal; with hammering, the shape *grows.* Each hammer beat is compressing the metal. Through this compression, the molecular structure changes and an additional tension is added. Without this additional tension from hammering, the vibration of the cymbal would be slower and softer, and there wouldn't be such a wide range of frequencies. Hammering gives the cymbal its energy. By hammering special metals in special ways, we control that energy and are able to produce the specific sounds that are required."

It was essential for Robert to tell me this before we got to the hammering area, because the noise in the vicinity of this important operation excludes any possibility of conversation. The craftsmen sit in cubicles, they wear ear protection, and they have strategically placed mirrors so that they can see if anybody comes up behind them and won't be startled by a sudden tap on the shoulder.

During the hammering process, the force of the stroke is taken by a small anvil. The actual hammer pressure is supplied by a pneumatic machine. It is important to understand that this doesn't make it any less of a "hand" operation. The point at which each hammer blow falls is chosen by the craftsman, and not only that, but he



Shaving of the cymbals according to given directions and third control

controls the force of the blow with a pedal. There is no hint of automation here. The machine is only negating the need for muscle power, and therefore cutting out the possibility of inconsistencies in the hammering caused by muscle fatigue. Each craftsman has a card that tells him in special code the exact hammer pattern required for the particular cymbal he is working on. He also has a finished "master" cymbal, so that he can compare the patterns and also make sure that he is achieving the correct amount of "bow" in the profile of the cymbal.

I ask Robert why a card is needed. Don't they learn what is required for the various cymbal types? "We do about 500 cymbal types, so obviously they are not working on one type all the time; they need to be

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Sound test andfinal inspection of the cymbals

by Robyn Flans

The manifestation of the Paiste philosophy can be seen in their Drummer Service. Until two years ago, Bobby Leiser was employed by Paiste full-time. Now, however, he is working as a free-lance agent for the company, yet he still basically handles the same responsibilities, dealing with the drummers in the European field.

He indicates that Drummer Service has unofficially been in operation since Paiste began in Switzerland. "Robert and Toomas had an awful lot of problems getting into the shops with their cymbals, because at the time, all the shops had Zildjian cymbals. The shop owners didn't want something else, because it meant that they had to have a bigger stock and put more money out. So Robert and Toomas started in the late '60s to go to the drummers with their own product and make them try it out, so the drummers would go into the shops and ask for Paiste cymbals. That forced the shopkeepers to have Paiste cymbals in stock. The whole success of Paiste is based, first, on the quality of the product, but secondly, on Drummer Service."

In the Paiste tradition, Bobby is constantly on the road, attending rock festivals, where he takes a wide variety of cymbals with him so drummers have the opportunity to try new sounds, or traveling with an endorsee to work out possible problems. "At festivals, drummers who know Paiste can try out some new cymbals they have never seen before. Those who never had Paiste can try the cymbals for the first time in a live situation. A lot of these people can't afford to go to a shop to buy cymbals, particularly since, in a week, it might turn out to be the wrong cymbal. They always sound different in a live situation from what they sound like in a shop. In a live situation, they really sound true.

"When 1 go with a group for two or three days, it's mostly when a drummer is having problems. For example, there was a drummer who was cracking quite a lot of cymbals, so I went to three or four shows and watched him. Some drummers are putting the cymbals too high or at the wrong angle. The cymbal might be very high up and very flat, so instead of hitting the cymbal, they hit the edge, which is what cracks a lot of cymbals. I'll explain to the drummers that, if they don't want to lower the cymbals, they should at least angle them a little bit.

"I sit behind the drummers during the shows to look at what they are doing. I also see when they are using the wrong cymbals. We have drummers who like to use 602s, and sometimes they are the wrong cymbals. I'll sit behind their drumkits and bash on their 602 crashes to let them listen from where the audience sits. Then they will hear that their cymbals are crying instead of crashing, because they are hitting too hard. It is something to give drummers the right approach to the cymbal sound, because most of the drummers don't really understand that the cymbal sound is completely different behind their drumkits than in the audience through a big PA.

Steve Ettleson and Michi Prigione

"My main purpose is to show the people that we are really interested in them as drummers, and then on a personal level as well. I think that, in this business, you can't work strictly on a business level. It has to be a bit more. Then, when they tell me the problems they have with the cymbals, I bring this information to the Sound Development department. This information can then be used in making new cymbals. So it's kind of a research job. First of all, it's a friend and business relationship, and then a sound research job."

While employed by Paiste, Bobby was working Thursday through Sunday on the road or at concerts, and Monday through Wednesday in the Nottwil office. Because office work isn't his forte, Bobby decided to suggest to Paiste that he only work in the field. Since 1977 it has been Michel (known to most as Michi) Prigione who has held down the office front for drummers out on the road to correspond with and contact.

"Besides all the endorsees, we have a lot of consumers, and there is a lot of direct contact with these people," Michi explains. "They have a lot of questions, inquiries, wishes, and sound ideas. There are musicians who are creative, but who aren't necessarily superstars, and it is important for us to talk to them as well. The job entails that, in addition to taking care of endorsees and sometimes dealers, as well as the percussion specialists. It also means collecting input about new talents and products."

Since Michi is now working with the company in other areas, Daniele Frucci has taken over that position. In Germany, Fips Hohnecker handles Drummer Service, while in America, there is primarily one man who runs Drummer Service in Brea, California, both internally and in the field. Steve Ettleson has been with Paiste America since its inception in 1981.

"It's not a 40-hour week for him, but as many hours as a week has," Michi says of Steve. "That's mainly his working time. Of course, it's a lot better for a drummer based in America to have a guy like Steve, who has been out in the field, who is a musician, and who has the knowledge of drummers. He knows the market and knows what's going on. It's better for us to have a facility in California, and work the U.S. from there than to do it all from Europe. We did that for a few years, but we could never keep the contact we can by doing it this way. Steve brought us a lot more new talent in America."

One of Ettleson's primary responsibilities is in artist relations with the endorsees, as well as signing them to the endorsement to begin with. "I base that on the drummer's ability," explains Steve. "A drummer can be in a top band and that gives us a lot of visibility. But if that drummer isn't good, I feel that he or she is not doing Paiste any good, and if that drummer ever does leave that band, all we've got is somebody who used to be in a top band. The drummer also has to be somebody who can work with us in the area of sound development.

"I go to the concerts as artist relations, but I also go to hear the music and the cymbals that this particular drummer likes. The drummer will be sitting there playing these cymbals, and while they may be exactly what he or she wants to hear sitting at the drumset, they may not be doing the job that has to be done out in front, past the bass drum. The drummer can get that feedback from me also. The last thing drummers want to do is play their hearts out all night and not have anybody hear them."

When he's not at a concert, Steve is in the office dealing with the day-to-day problems. "An average day could be getting a call from one of our endorsees who might need a particular sound from a particular cymbal. The endorsee will make an appointment, come to the office, and we'll go through a lot of different cymbals to find exactly what that drummer wants. A lot of times, the drummer might not know what he or she wants. The endorsee might say, 'I'm playing this type of a gig—this type of music. It's real loud or real soft. The cymbal setup I have now isn't quite

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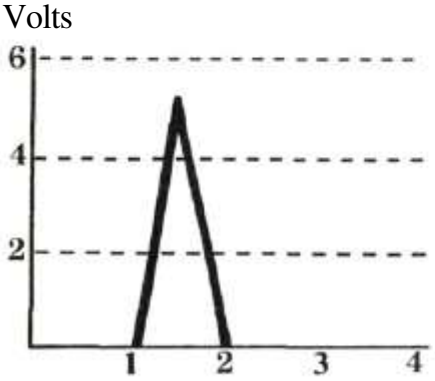
by Reek Havok

Questions And Answers

Since my first column in this department appeared a few months ago, I've received quite a bit of mail, much of it containing specific questions regarding the use of electronic drums. I really appreciate the questions, and what I'm going to do is combine them from time to time into a column like this one. In this way, I can address—as directly and succinctly as possible—any problems you might be having with your electronic equipment, or any questions you may have about the subject of electronic percussion in general. So here we go with the first batch.

Q. My Simmons electronic drumkit has trigger input jacks located at the rear of the brain. We tried (in the studio) to trigger the Simmons from our drum machine, but got very poor results. The sound produced was either that of "flamming" or a "blap" instead of a "tat" sound. Why does the Simmons unit sound funny and trigger poorly?—Bruce Foote

A. The problem you speak of is a very common one. (You failed to mention whether you had an *SDS5, 7,* or *8.* The *SDS8* uses a molex plug, so I'll assume that you have a 5 or 7.) The Simmons kits are great machines, but they are difficult to trigger directly from an external signal like the drum machine you mentioned. The Simmons kit needs a very sharp signal to trigger it properly. A signal of this sort is called a "voltage spike" and is exactly like the signal given from one of your drum pads, although the trigger input requires a much "hotter" or more powerful signal.



Typical 5-volt voltage spike, with 2-millisecond gap between rise and fall time.

As you can see, the signal has a very quick rise and fall, which most audible sounds do not. You might try the rim sound of the drum machine; it is the most like the signal you want—very percussive and very short. Another way is to try a noise gate on the sounds coming from your drum machine. Gate the sounds as tight as possible, and then run them into your Simmons brain. I have had some success using these methods with the *SDS5* (but little to no success using them with the *SDS7).* The ultimate answer is a trigger converter. I use an *MX-1* by Marc Electronics, which works very well. I can take any kind of signal in (voltage pulse, prerecorded drum tracks, etc.), adjust the *MX-1* to track the signal properly, and then adjust the output to trigger just about anything. Similar units are also available from Cooper Electronics and Garfield Electronics. All of these devices should be obtainable from your local dealer. This would be the most reliable and effective solution to your problem.

Q. I am about to take the big step into electronic percussion and am seriously considering purchasing a Simmons SDS7. *What do you think would be the best way to go?—Skip Bane*

A. The *SDS7 is* probably one of the most advanced kits on the market, and using this for your first "big step" might be more like a giant leap! The *SDS7* has 15 different parameters per drum, per 99 programmed drumkits. Each of these parameters is numerically adjustable from 0 to 255. With all these variables, this machine is wonderfully flexible, but also *amazingly* complex. I would suggest starting off with something a bit tamer, like a Simmons *ClapTrap* or an E-MU Systems *E-Drum.* Both are fairly basic and will help you to understand electronic percussion at a less dramatic level of confusion. The CB-700 by Simmons *SDS 800* (or similar units from other companies) might also be a more realistic move towards understanding electronic drumsets, and thus, perhaps, a more sensible first choice.

Q. Is what I hear about drummers getting arthritis from playing electronic drums true?—Robby Schweitzer

Q. What is the "Simmons wrist/Simmons knee" syndrome people talk about?—D. Boal

A. I've personally never heard of anybody getting arthritis from playing on *any* electronic drums. However, there can be a problem getting used to playing an electronic kit because of the harder playing surface of most of the drum pads themselves. The first thing to remember is that you're actually playing a different instrument, which is going to require different techniques and a different approach. Some drummers have a very tight, tug-of-war-like grip on their sticks. These people are going to be the most uncomfortable. It's sort of the reverse of the plight of a keyboard player who plays only synthesizers that have very light keys and is very comfortable with them. When it's time to play piano—which has very heavy keys, by comparison—our keyboardist must physically play harder and finds it difficult to adjust. The same theory applies to a bass player who has played an electric bass for years and then tries an acoustic bass. It's a different instrument. You must approach it as such or suffer the consequences.

When I switched over from real drums to synth drums, I actually loosened my grip a bit to eliminate that stick vibration or "shock" that is commonly associated with the so-called "Simmons wrist" syndrome. What you must realize is that you don't have to play hard to be heard.

The major drawback in electronic drums, in my opinion, is their lack of touch sensitivity—being able to play increasingly harder and get correspondingly louder. Usually, the electronic drums themselves are pushing 75-90% of their

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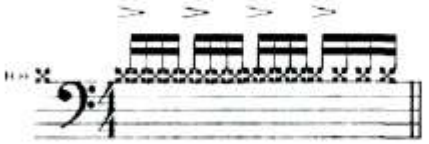
maximum output level (which is usually where the best sound is) when you're playing at a comfortable, normal volume, leaving little or no room for accents or extreme changes in volume. This can be compensated for with an increase in overall volume on your mixer or amp, and a decrease in sensitivity of the pads themselves. This results in an adequate volume when playing comfortably, but still leaves headroom to achieve the desired increase in volume as you play harder.

I believe that most of the physical problems created by electronic drums stem from drummers not being able to hear themselves as well as they should. No matter how loud you are to the audience or band members on stage, if you can't hear yourself well enough, you're going to play harder and harder in an attempt to achieve the volume you desire. (One must remember that, on a real drumkit, the sound is being projected from all around you.) Whether it is due to lack of power or poor speaker placement, inadequate self-monitoring is going to cause you to exert unnecessary striking force, while obtaining an insignificant or undesirable result. Here is where we start to experience the "shock" comparable to hitting a telephone pole with a baseball bat. A speaker blowing at you at a volume level comfortable to you (probably comparable to what you were used to with your old acoustic set) will solve the problem of "beating a hard surface with a stick."

Q. How do I program my drum machine so it doesn't sound so mechanical?—Patrick Bradley

A. One very good trick in de-mechanizing drum machines is the proper use of accents. If, for example, you're using a 16th-note pattern on the hi-hat, use the accent on the downbeat, as shown below.



When drummers play two bass drum beats in a row like this, they typically play the first beat stronger than the second beat, as shown below.

Another good tool for programming drum machines is a good drum book with lots of different beats in it.

Any questions pertaining to electronic drums that you wish directed to me should be addressed to Reek Havok, Questions And Answers, c/o Modern Drummer, *870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.*

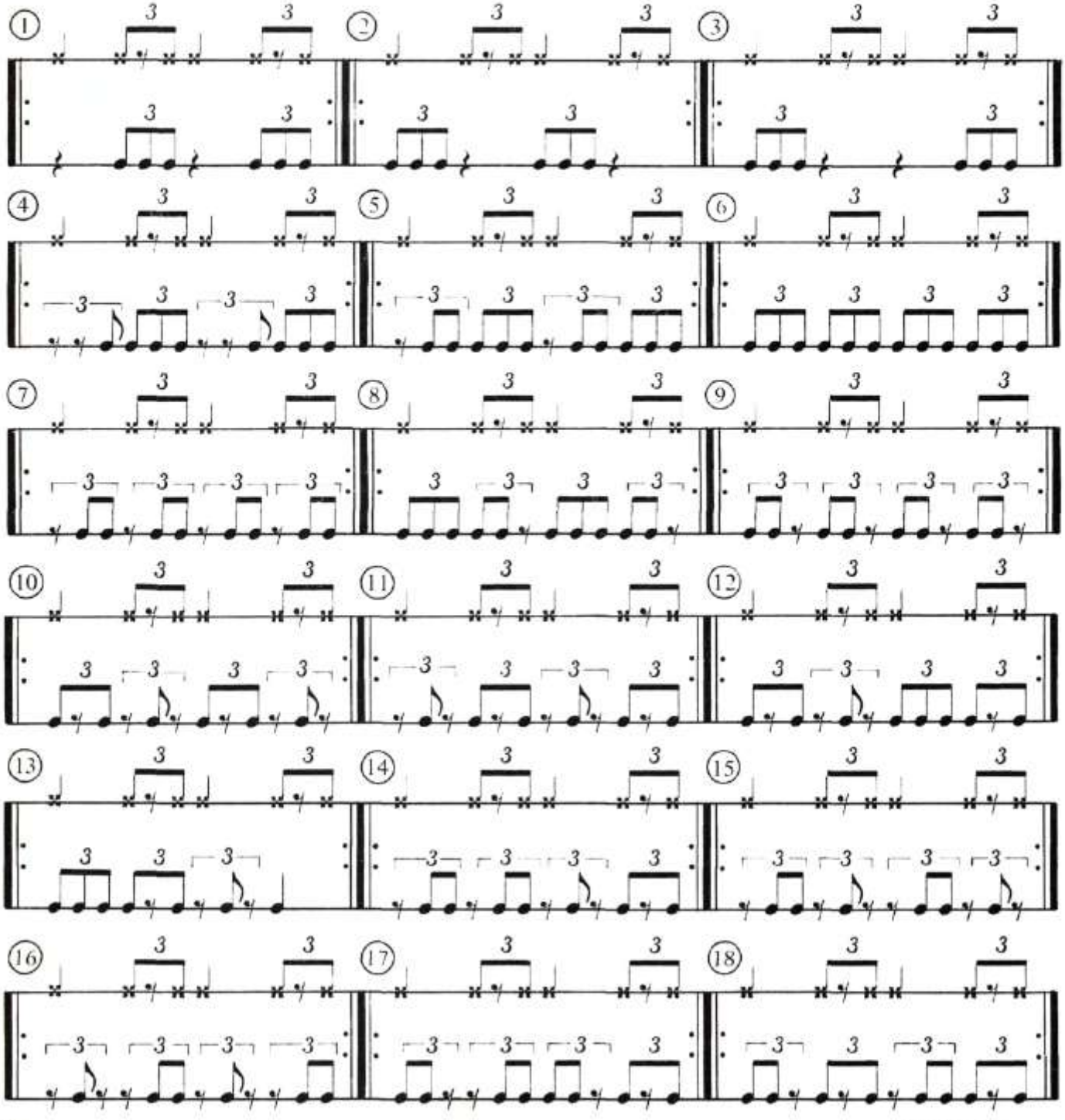
by Mark Hurley

Developing Independence: Part 2

This month, we'll work on various triplet rhythms against the standard time pattern, in an effort to further develop our independence skills.

Basic Left-Hand Independence

We'll begin by working on the 18 triplet-based exercises that follow. Keep a smooth, relaxed time feel, and strive for total accuracy with each pattern before moving on to the next. As usual, the bass drum should be played on every beat of the measure, and the hi-hat on 2 and 4.

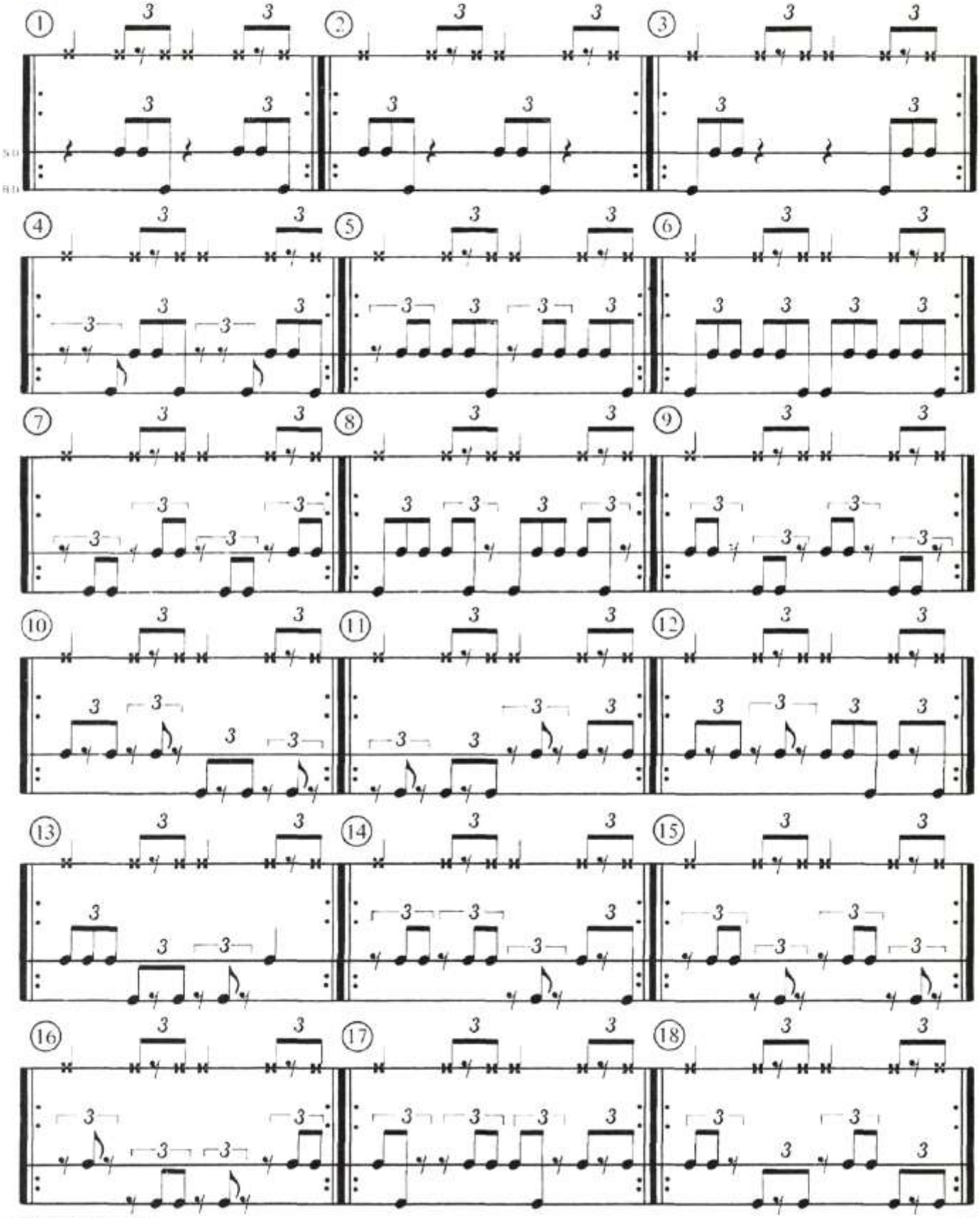


Bass Drum Independence

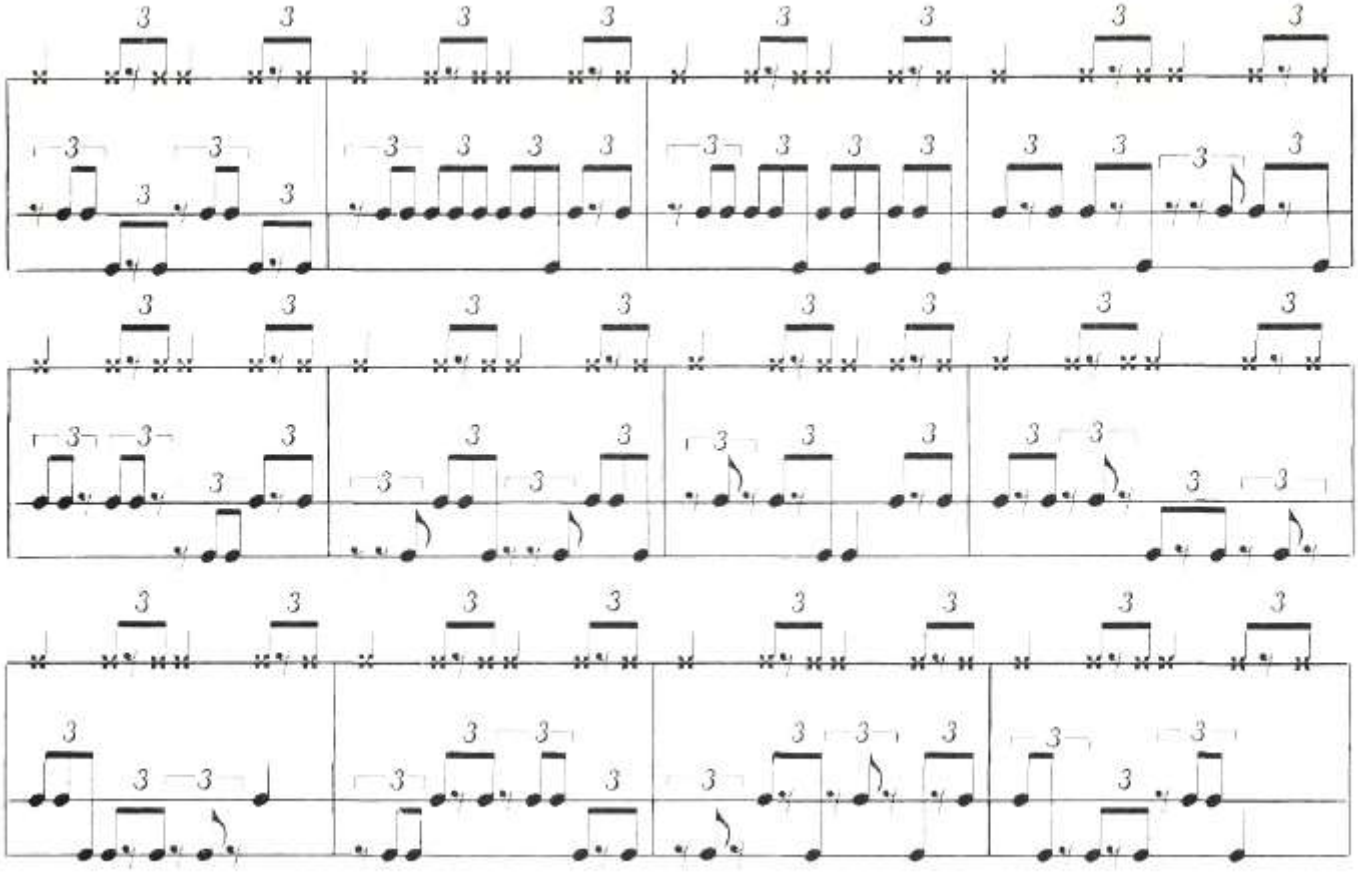
Once you can play all of the preceding exercises with the left hand, go back to the beginning, and play the figures with your bass drum while maintaining the ride cymbal rhythm and the hi-hat. Practice slowly at first, increasing the speed only after you're certain that each exercise is being played correctly.

Combinations

Here's a selection of combined snare drum and bass drum figures played independently of the time, which will test your ability.



We'll conclude Part 2 with a 12-bar solo that should be played at a medium tempo, with a good, solid time feel.



Next month in Part 3, we'll combine everything we've learned thus far. This will be challenging material, so be sure to continue to practice all of the exercises and solos from Parts 1 and 2, working out any problem areas that may exist.

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We would like to thank the following artists who made significant contributions to *Modern Percussionist's* first year:

Dale Anderson, Ray Barretto, James Blades, Gary Burton, The Garfield Cadets, Forrest Clark, Dennis DeLucia, Vic Firth, George Gaber, Gordon Gottlieb, Ralph Hardimon, Marty Hurley, Bobby Hutcherson, Donald Knaack, Chris Lamb, Morris Lang, Ralph MacDonald, Montego Joe, Greg & Judi Murray, Nexus (Bob Becker, Bill Cahn, Robin Engelman, Russell Hartenberger, John Wyre), Louis Oddo, Olatunji, Arthur Press, Emil Richards, Tim Richards, Dave Samuels, Fred Sanford, John Santos, Carol Steele, Leigh Howard Stevens, and all of our fine writers and photographers.

Our second year is going to be even better!

MODERN PERCUSSIONIST

Nick Ceroli

by Rick Van Horn

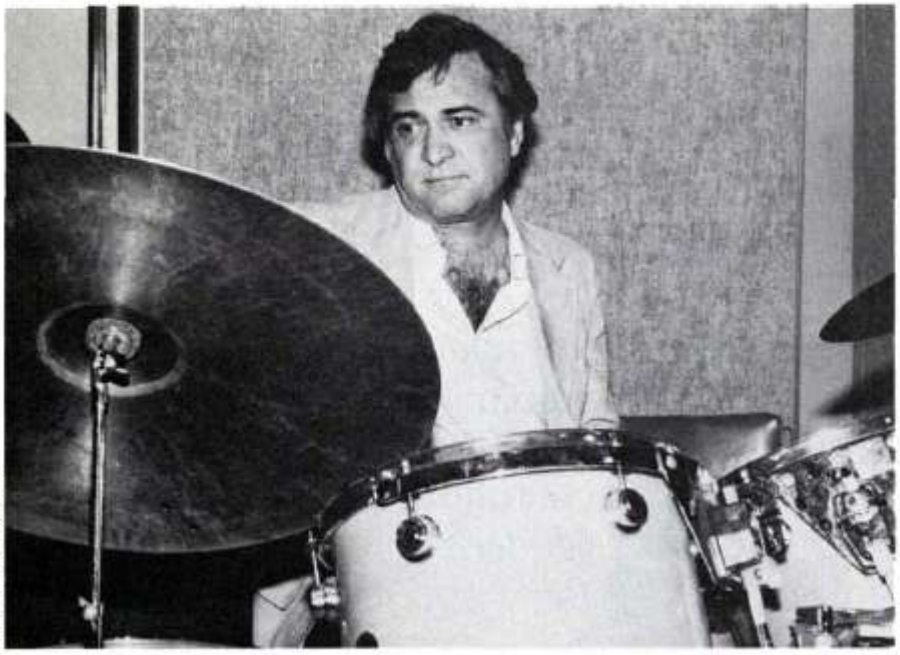

Photo by Paul Jonason

The drumming community was shocked and saddened recently by the sudden passing of Nick Ceroli. Nick died in his Studio City, California, home on Sunday, August 11, apparently the victim of a heart attack. He was 45. An extremely well-respected player, Nick was noted for his versatility and taste. He was equally at home with a big band or a jazz trio, and his professional credits include performances with some of the most successful groups and artists in every field.

Nick was born in Niles, Ohio, and studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. He began his professional career with the Ray Anthony band in the late '50s, and progressed through the bands of Lionel Hampton, Terry Gibbs, and Stan Kenton. Never a fan of rock or "pop" music, but rather a mainstream jazz and big band player, Nick nonetheless joined Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass in 1965. He spent five years with that incredibly successful group, lending his talent to an act once described as having "single-handedly returned instrumental music to the American popular consciousness."

Following his TJB stand, Nick toured with Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, as well as with Vikki Carr. He was especially favored by vocalists because of his ability to perform tastefully while retaining a supporting role.

Nick often subbed on the *Tonight Show,* and for a period was the regular drummer for Mori Lindsey's orchestra on the *Merv Griffin Show.* More recently, he had been working with the bands of Zoot Sims, Dee Barton, Don Menza, and Bob Florence. His work on the Bob Florence Big Band album, *Soaring,* was reviewed in the April, 1984 issue of *MD* as being "an education in style. He plays with fire, imagination and drive, yet remains totally musical and supportive at all times."

Nick was also active with smaller groups. He performed memorably with his own trio at a special evening of drum-related entertainment at last January's NAMM Winter Market, and his last public appearance, in early August, was with guitarist Barney Kessel's trio at the Sunset Hyatt in Los Angeles.

Nick was also respected as an authority on big band playing. As such, he contributed his knowledge to fact sheets by Drum Workshop, Inc. and to three *Driver's Seat* columns in *MD* (May '84, March and April '85).

Other qualities Nick possessed that endeared him to his musical colleagues were his originality and sense of humor. Bob Florence tells an interesting story: "Nick was a great fan of Beethoven—probably from his conservatory days. He was also a fanatic for Duke Ellington. In fact, he had a collection of Ellington music that even included Armed Forces Radio airchecks made during the war. Once, I found a very rare album of Duke playing Beethoven, and I offered it to Nick as a gift. He already had it, but he thanked me anyway, adding, 'Now, if you can just find one of Beethoven playing Duke ....' "

When asked to express his feelings about Nick's sudden passing, Buddy Rich felt that the man's playing spoke for itself, but added as a personal note, "It's a tragic loss, and I'll miss him as a friend." Nick's contribution to the art of drumming was quiet but significant, and his loss will be felt by everyone who appreciates taste, musicality, and excellence in a performing artist.

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the assistance of Don Lombardi, President of Drum Workshop, Inc., in the preparation of this article. Don was a close friend of Nick Ceroli for over 20 years, and was instrumental in providing background and anecdotes pertaining to Nick's career.

As we went to press on this issue, we learned of the passing of Papa Jo Jones and Philly Joe Jones. We will present memorial tributes to both gentlemen in our December issue.

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Photo by Ebet Roberts

Purdie *continued from page 13*

years. What are the advantages of being a "mature" man playing rock 'n' roll?

BP: You learn how to be tolerant and how to accept what other people tell you, even if you think it's wrong. And who's to say it's wrong if other people are getting pleasure from it?

CF: What's the disadvantage?

BP: It can hurt you here. [points to his ear] It's so loud. That loudness can hurt you mentally and physically, but if you're playing rock, it's got to be *loud.* It's a driving force, and it's excruciating sometimes. It hurts. It takes a lot out of you, so you really have to want to do it. It's a challenge for me to see if I can still do it. I have no problems adapting to rock 'n' roll. Being a musician *first* has always been my thing. Concept is second. The only problem I ever had with rock 'n' roll was to get the speakers out of my ears, so I put the speakers to one side of me and I had no problem hearing. I don't have to worry about all the power business, because the other speakers are up there in front of me for the other people to hear the drums. I don't need the drums in my speakers; I know what I'm playing. What I put in the speakers behind me is the lead, which is the melody. That's my monitor.

When I toured with Jeff Beck, the first thing that went in my monitor was the piano—Max Middleton. Then, I put in just a little guitar, because I could hear it in front of me—20 dB's, killing you! So I've got the bass, the guitar and piano sitting right on top of me, so I can hear what's happening, chord-wise, melody-wise, and rhythm-wise. That's all I need. And that volume: Okay, say we've got ten dB's—that volume is only on three. I don't want anymore. I can *hear what* I'm doing.

CF: Don't most other drummers set up that way?

BP: None of them! The first thing they do is put the drums in the monitor, and the bass drum is so loud that they can't hear.

CF: Is that why some of them wear headphones?

BP: Well, usually what they've got in the headphones is the same thing—drums. They're listening to themselves. Consequently, it's just loud on top of loud. Before you realize it, all the highs are gone, and they start dropping tempo. If you're going to listen to yourself, you're going to get tired of hearing yourself. You think you're on, and you don't realize that you're coming down and dropping tempo, because you don't hear anybody else.

CF: Yes, I heard someone recently who was wearing headphones and dropping tempo.

BP: That's normal.

CF: Then why would drummers wear them?

BP: Because they're so into themselves that they think they know what's going on, or they're insecure about what they're playing.

CF: You've played all kinds of music. Does it pose problems for you, having to adjust, for example, from a jazz feel to a rock feel?

BP: You do have to hit harder with rock. You must use force. You're hitting twice as hard with rock as you are with jazz, and it's hard not to drop tempo, because you find yourself up on your toes. 1 don't look down on rock 'n' roll musicians, like some jazz players do. Some jazz drummers look down on rock 'n' roll because they don't know it. They can't interpret it, so they can't play it. They can't play it, so they don't like it. Rock 'n' roll has simplicity. Jazz is sometimes busy, and it's always easier to play busy. When you play busy, you can hide your mistakes, and the more you play, the more mistakes you'll make. That's why it's *so hard* to groove. When you're grooving, you don't have to play anything but 2 and 4, but when you miss, it sticks out like a sore thumb. It's harder to play rock and R&B than anything else, because it *is* so simple.

CF: Do you have a favorite style of music when it comes to drumming?

BP: That's tough. I guess it would be Latin. Latin is the base of all music. The best way to understand the different concepts in music is to know Latin first. It's the bridge between all ways of playing. What turned me around on Latin was Candido, the Cuban conga player. From Candido I went directly to Mongo Santamaria. Mongo wasn't educated in music, but when you saw his expression and heard him play: Any finger that hit that conga *said* something. It *spoke.* Mongo and I did three records together, and it completely turned me around. R&B, jazz, and Latin have always worked together as far as I'm concerned.

CF: You toured as Jeff Beck's drummer on a double bill with the Mahavishnu Orchestra. You've said it was one of your favorite tours. Why?

BP: It was fun! I lived like a superstar. I didn't have to lift a finger except to play the drums. I had two years, first class. I thought I had been first class before, but I lived like a king, with such ease and taste. And I played better than ever; there was nothing in my way. All I had to do was make music. And, oh God, did we make music!

CF: What were the songs on that tour?

BP: From the *Blow By Blow* album, mostly.

CF: But you never recorded with Jeff Beck?

BP: Oh yeah, we've got stuff that's sitting in the can; I don't know if they'll ever release it. I did a couple of overdubs on *Blow By Blow,* but I think it was Richard Bailey's name on the cover. I just did a little fixing up. That's all I ever do—fix things up for people. [chuckles]

CF: Of course, that's not all you do. I know you've done some producing.

BP: Yes, but a lot of people in the business don't know me as a producer, as a band-

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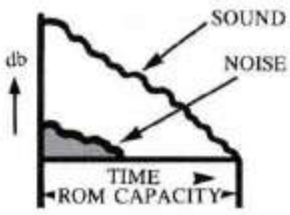

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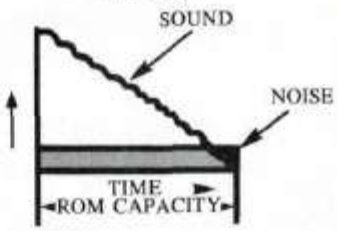

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leader, or as a businessman. I'm all of those; I've always been more than just an artist. But if the record companies dealt with you as a musician first, they have problems seeing you in a business light. They do have a point, sometimes, if you're not able, as an artist, to separate the music from the business, because when you're a musician you must never, *never* think of money when you're on that stage or in that studio. If you do, you're doomed from the start. You won't play right if you're thinking about getting paid. You've got to surrender your mind to the music, totally. Work out the business details before or after you play, but never taint that time when your mind should be on the music. Of course, having a manager can help you keep your mind on the music. Not only that—in this business the number of people who are honest and will give you a decent count is not too good, so you need to have someone to make sure you're not getting burned.

CF: I know you've always spoken about the importance of the drumming teachers you had and your love for passing on to others what they taught you. What makes a good teacher?

BP: Teachers are your guides. If they can guide you in the right direction and keep you motivated, then they are great teachers. It's that simple. They are not supposed to do your work or get you to mimic them.

CF: They are not supposed to put obstacles there, either.

BP: Oh yes they are! That's part of the whole thing. Out of 200 students I've had, every one of them had the world thrown at them the first day they came through the door. The best thing that can happen to me as a teacher is to see my students become frustrated. I love it, because that means they will learn. They are going to have to force themselves to work through whatever is frustrating them. My obstacles are always musical ones; I'm not into head trips. If you're coming to me, come prepared to work hard. Come prepared to learn discipline. Discipline is the most important thing for a musician coming up, and you can only get it from a teacher. You can't go out and be a rebel all your life—not in everything. You have to follow somebody's rules sometime, even if they're your own. There are going to be restrictions. But if you learn your craft, you can make it in the system. There's nothing you can't do.

CF: Certainly one of your most successful former students is Max Weinberg, Bruce Springsteen's drummer.

BP: [Chuckles] Oh yes. Max was really going through some changes then. Every week I had to go through de-tox with him. I finally told him, "Max, don't come back." I told him that for six months to a year—"Max, don't come back. I don't want to see you." He had more problems than a barrel of monkeys—his girlfriend, somebody else's girlfriend—the whole works. Two years later, when he was finally getting himself together and by then working with another teacher, he was starting to apply everything I said, because his other teacher said the exact same thing. I saw him and I said, "Why don't you go back and listen to the tapes you have from when you were my student?" All of a sudden, everything I said sank in, and he was able to keep his drumming job. He almost lost it, and there were more drummers than you could count after that job. Now Max has really got himself together; he's on the right track.

CF: You're somewhat of a father figure in the drumming world. Your name comes up often when young drummers are asked to name influences.

BP: I guess I am. I've given something to this business. I've set some standards. It feels good to get some credit from the younger drummers for what I've done. I was really knocked out by Jeff Porcaro, the drummer for Toto. He gave me credit for influencing him on "Rosanna," which was such a big hit for him. He was using the rhythm I created—the Purdie shuffle—on that song, and he acknowledged that.

CF: You've been a model for young drummers. What have you learned from them?

BP: To stay on top of everything. You cannot slack. Don't think you can say just anything to them, and they'll accept it. First of all, they're too well informed on things. I admire that. I've always wanted to know everything I could, in order to understand what everyone in the studio does. Young people have inquiring minds. That's what's good about youth. You're always looking for answers. Old minds don't ask questions, and they don't want to hear any.

CF: Can you ever know *too much* about music?

BP: Well, there are two sides to that. In one way, knowing too much can interfere with things, if you let it. For example, some friends and I went to a concert, and we found ourselves criticizing the young people who were playing—a little mistake here, a little drop in tempo there. Then I said, "Wait a minute. I think we've become too professional." When you become *too* professional, sometimes it gets in the way of enjoying things. You've lost the whole point of making music, which is to have fun and feel good about being alive.

The other side to knowing about music is when you're young and you've got all this information coming at you, from magazines like *Modern Drummer,* and clinics and teachers. When you've got 15 or 20 different people telling you *their* way of playing drums, it's time for *you* to go out and try it your way. Experiment. Pick out what is best suited for you. From each drummer you like, you take a little bit

from here, a little bit from there, and before you know it, it's sounding like a *big* bit. It's sounding like *you,* and not any of them. But you do need the guidance of a teacher.

CF: Don't you think there's such a thing as self-guidance and self-discipline?

BP: Forget it. You need the guidance. Self-taught is for the birds.

CF: What about a musical genius like Erroll Garner? He was self-taught.

BP: I don't care. He couldn't read music!

CF: Maybe, but listen to how he played!

BP: Wonderful! Marvelous. But did you ever play with him? I played on Erroll's final two albums. You had to stand around and wait until he learned his part, and that was frustrating for people who read music. 1 loved Erroll to death, and it *hurt* me to know he couldn't read music. I knew what he must have felt when he had 50 musicians there who read music, and he didn't.

CF: Why didn't he try to learn?

BP: Because he *was* self-taught. When you're self-taught, you learn too many bad habits, and bad habits can be the worst thing for any musician. B-A-D habits—they are the downfall of 90% of all the musicians in the world.

CF: Give me examples of bad habits for drummers.

BP: Sitting wrong. Drummers should sit *up,* with their backs positioned as if they had braces behind them and with their feet flat on the floor. If you learn how to play flat-footed, it's easy to come up on your toes when necessary. If you learn to play on your toes, there's no place else for you to go. And if you always play on your toes, you'll end up with nerves, so that when you want to hit something light and easy, you can't do it. So you lose the subtlety—the beauty. You get "thump" instead of "ting." It can't be helped. Also, when you play with your fingers and you don't use the wrists, you can get all the speed in the world, but you're not going to be able to sustain it because the tendons will stretch. If your tendons stretch, sticks are going to drop out of your hands. So you need the wrists to help you with power, longevity, and discipline. It takes years to find that out.

CF: You said a key word there—longevity. You're still playing. Besides the drummers who have died from the abuse of their lifestyles, I've seen the ones almost physically crippled from the abuse of their playing styles.

BP: Well, that was what my teachers tried to tell me in the beginning, but my head is so hard. I'm from Missouri. Show me. And of course, that's exactly what it did—showed me. It kicked me and put me on my back—knocked me down. I was dropping sticks all over the place. It scared me to *death.*

CF: When did that happen?

BP: The late '60s. I had so much speed that I was playing everything with my fingers; I forgot all about my wrists. It caught up with me. I went to the doctor. He examined me and said, "Purdie, you've stretched the tendons in your fingers, so you're losing the sensitivity in them, and that's why you can't hold on to things. I don't know what I can tell you to do." I thought to myself, "I didn't have this problem when I was playing conventional." So I went back to playing conventional. The first thing that happened was I started playing with my wrists, and it *hurt.* I said, "Maybe it's my *wrists,"* and so I went back to my wrists.

CF: How long did it take you to get it all back?

BP: About three years.

CF: So you had to relearn drumming.

BP: Thank you. [chuckles] But you don't *tell* people that. [laughs] I wouldn't have had any work! I'd have been out of the business if I'd told people that I had a problem. They would have said that I'd lost it.

CF: Back to the question of reading music: Some people would say it's confining to play from a chart.

BP: Reading *gives* you freedom. I am definitely freer with a chart than without one, because now I don't have to worry about where the music is going. I can see it. The problem is that most people read a bar at a time. You can't do that; you'll sound mechanical. And one thing you must remember and understand is that reading

is interpretation. That quarter note will be a quarter note no matter *who* plays it. But it's how you as an individual interpret that quarter note that makes all the difference.

CF: You've got one of the most distinctive drum sounds in the business. How do you achieve your studio drum sound?

BP: Well, in the studio, they try to get the sound as dead as possible—no overtones, no ring. They want a thud—a thump. They add the highs or the lows in the mixing. The sound itself is muffled, so you have to hit the drums *hard* in the studio to get the sound out. But while you're hitting hard, you've still got to keep the sound musical, and you've still got to retain your sensitivity. You have to do all this while you're *banging* it out! So you have to fake it sometimes—fake that hard hitting that everyone thinks you're doing and achieve the sound another way. Instead of dropping the sticks, I can get the same impact by coming off the drum at the same time I'm hitting. That's wrist action. That gives me the clarity—the crispness of feel. I get the hard sound without *doing* the hard sound. It takes a lot of years to understand the difference between letting the stick fall down and letting it rebound from the drum. Also, I use the rim a lot, not just on cross sticking. I use the rim and the drum together, but I'm not pressing down on it. I'm coming off so I'm still getting the skin, but I'm getting it higher. It's not as deep as the sound of the drummer who is just hitting the center of the snare. I want the highs, and I want the brilliance that muffling robs and has to be restored with mixing. So I try to give myself an edge by using the rim, so I can get some of my highs and retain my depth of feel.

CF: How do you tune your drums?

BP: I tune the bass drum first, getting the depth that I want for a live sound, and then making it lower and deeper for the studio. Then I move up to the floor tom, and I just tune it so it sounds good with the bass drum. It's the same thing with the toms and the snare. I never tune the drums to thirds. It's the worst thing you can do. You alienate the bass player and the piano, because you're automatically moving into their register. Stay within the drum sound, and you can't help but sound good.

CF: Why do you play with the ride cymbal on the left?

BP: It's easier to get to. Why waste energy? It's easier to play the ride, when you use it as much as I do, in front of you. One reason I put the ride over to the left was because I was doing a lot of playing behind artists, and I wanted to see them as they played. I couldn't see them when I had to reach over for my ride cymbal. I was concentrating too much on my right side when everything was in front of me.

CF: You started with an 18" bass drum, then you went to a 22", and now you're back at 18".

BP: I played the 22" bass for two years because Sonor, who I was endorsing, asked me to. The 22" was alright, but it's just that everything comes up in the air, so you've got to reach further to get what you want. I find that the 18" bass gives me the opportunity to see more and to be seen more, and I can still get a big enough sound. You don't need a big bass drum to get a big sound. That's an ego thing.

CF: How do you feel about the incorporation of electronics in drumming?

BP: Well, of course, the drum machines have taken work from studio drummers. But the electronic drum sound is new and different; it has given a shot in the arm to record sales when things were becoming stagnant.

Simmons approached me a few years ago about endorsing their drums. I liked them, but I couldn't endorse them, because Simmons wanted me to give up acoustic drums. I couldn't do that. I like the sensitivity, the subtlety, and the overall *feel* of acoustic drums. They can take me anywhere in the world; it's unlimited and unpredictable. Electronic drums are limited; it's just a chip in there, and no matter how you hit them, the sound comes out one way—no surprises. But I've never knocked them, because I like the sound. It takes me to another dimension. I enjoy electronic drums as an appetizer—as a side dish, instead of a whole meal—and that's how I use them.

CF: You don't think electronic drums will replace acoustic, do you?

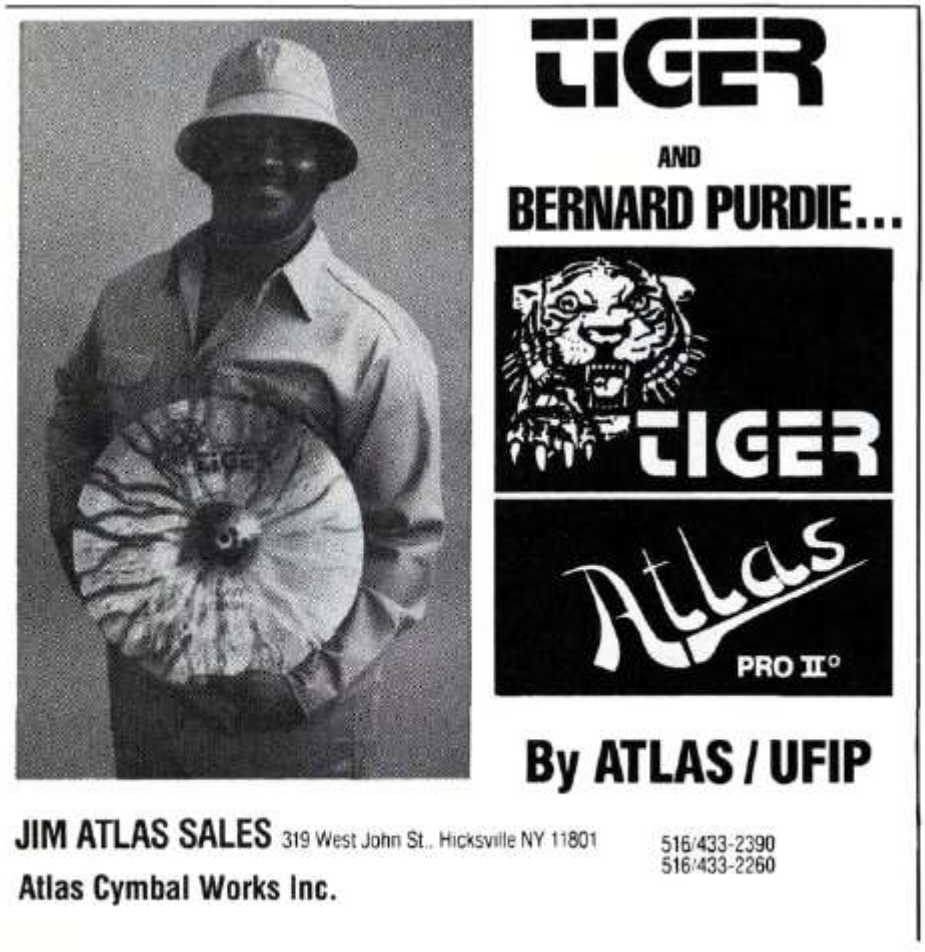
BP: Absolutely not. If you're going to be an all-around player, you need to master the acoustic sound as well as the electronic. If you're playing rock 'n' roll all day and night, you don't need acoustic drums because you're basically playing one way: loud. The sound is controlled by an engineer and the rhythm's just 2 and 4.

CF: Then you think rock 'n' roll will go totally electronic?

BP: It could. Many people think of rock 'n' roll as guitar music. It's not guitar music; it's electrified music. First, electric guitars became the dominant instrument in rock. Then, you had the bass for a while, and the keyboard's dominant now. When you think about it, the only instrument that hasn't dominated in rock is drums. And now with the electronic sound in drums, it's the drum age—a big new sound, a change. But I've been in the business a long time and I've seen these changes come and go. The whole music business will never go completely electronic. There's just too much music out there; one kind will never dominate forever.

CF: Of all the stars you've drummed for through the years, who were the toughest bosses?

BP: Well, James Brown was tough. I didn't even know James when I started



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with him. Sammy Lowe, an arranger, got me the gig because I could read music. James didn't like to do a lot of rehearsing when he was ready to record, so I had to be a quick learner. But I was so happy just to be working for him. I'd be sitting at those first sessions smiling like Stevie Wonder, bouncing and rolling and stuff, ready to do the job. I didn't have any problems with anybody. James and I had no conflicts at first, but after a while, 1 couldn't handle his way of correcting me on stage. He didn't have to run any star trips on me; I knew who he was. He was Mr. Brown to me. We parted company, but we're good friends now.

CF: What about Ray Charles? Was he a taskmaster on stage?

BP: Worse.

CF: He's great, but I've seen him really humiliate his musicians.

BP: He did that to me about two years ago in Chicago, when we were doing a reunion band. I hadn't played with Ray for about 12 years. I came in four bars too soon during a piano intro on a song. He yelled, "Hey drummer, lay off!" I felt two feet tall, but I wasn't alone; he had already crucified the bass player a few songs before.

One thing you will learn with Ray Charles or James Brown is dynamics, if you don't learn anything else. And that will stay with you forever. With James Brown, you could go from a whisper to a scream. With Ray Charles, you could go from a whisper to a moan. You could *never* get louder than the piano. So you learned control, and that means hold in.

CF: Is that good for you?

BP: Well, it's discipline. But that's why you go out with different people; you've got to let it out of yourself. That's why you go out on a jam session and go crazy, because you're bottled in. When you work with Count Basie, Duke Ellington, King Curtis, or Ray Charles, you hold it in. I know; I played with them all. Do you remember the Brooklyn Fox? Allan Freed, the DJ, had big name shows there in the early '60s, and I was in the house band. I also played in the Apollo house band for a couple of years, on and off. It was good experience for a young drummer like me.

CF: Working with greats like King Curtis and Aretha Franklin must have been magical.

BP: It was. The musical love affair I had with Aretha—what I could do for her with my drums and what she could do for me with her voice—was a once-in-a-lifetime thing. And it was magic that night at the Fillmore West when they recorded us.

It was such a loss when King Curtis died. I was asked to direct the funeral. There were hundreds of musicians calling from all over the world who wanted to play and hundreds of singers who wanted to sing at that funeral. I had to figure out how to put this together, so I decided we would have the band of the century for King Curtis, and we would play "Soul Serenade." He had asked in his will that Aretha sing that song at his funeral.

There were 10,000 people at that funeral, inside and outside the church. I had the band play from 11:00 to 12:00—60 to 70 musicians—you name it. Then it was time for the singers. This was the choir: Dionne Warwicke, Joe Tex, Brook Benton, Cissy Houston—the list was endless. Then Aretha came in with the lead. When she sang those words to "Soul Serenade," that place *moaned;* you could feel the walls of the church moving. Then it was time for the eulogy. Marvin Gaye was supposed to give the eulogy, but he hadn't been told. So Curtis' wife and mother asked me to do the eulogy. There had been a eulogy for me to read, but I just poured out my heart instead. I proceeded to tell them what King Curtis had done, not only for me as a young musician, but for everybody who had been touched by his music. He had helped so many of us.

CF: Bernard, what has been your biggest disappointment in the music business?

BP: What people say. Whether they don't call me for a job, or they say I'm too old to do a job, or that I'm a has-been, it hurts. It hurts if it comes from the same people I've tried to help. It hurts the most when it comes from fellow musicians. And of course, it hurts when it comes from producers who are worrying about being "in," the image—things like that. It hurts since I've tried to give so much back to this business, because it's been very good to me for the most part.

CF: It'll happen to them some day.

BP: Yes, but they don't realize that. That's the nature of this country in all things. Throwaways—hot one day, cold the next. It happens with baseball players where they say they're too old to play. But it can backfire on those owners when they trade that pitcher to another team, because he's "washed up," and he meets them and beats them in the World Series.

For me, it makes me work twice as hard. Sometimes I feel like, wow, I'm going right back to the days when I was auditioning. You actually feel like that. You haven't auditioned in 20 years, but it's a different ball game now.

CF: In addition to the work you've been doing with Cissy Houston and Dr. John, you've got a new group called Purdie's Evolution. How would you describe the evolution of Bernard Purdie?

BP: I've gone from one extreme to the other—up, down, up, down, up—but at the same time, never losing sight of reality, and always coming back stronger each time. From what I did 20 years ago to what I do today, 1 feel I've gotten better. It took me a lot of years to fight some of my hang-ups. I've gone through changes, I've learned, and I'm still learning. I'll try just about anything! [laughs] I've learned to let people do their thing and not worry about it if it's not just right. Don't force your ideas on people. Let it be. Years ago, I would always have to say something at a session. Today, I can put my hands up in the air and say, "Okay, fine," and get out of there as fast as I can, because I'm hoping like the devil they won't ask me what's wrong. If they *ask* me, I'll have to tell them, and 1 don't want to embarrass anybody. I learned how to subdue myself; it took me many years.

CF: You don't think people want to hear the truth?

BP: It depends. Each situation is unique. I never really was trying to force myself on anyone, but I've had people tell me later that they wished I hadn't said something at a session and that they stopped calling me because they thought I was trying to run their session.

CF: So that's part of being a studio drummer: Keep your mouth shut.

BP: Yes, you have to. They're paying you to be a drummer. That's all. Don't try to change the world. When I was coming along, I didn't know any better, so they *allowed me* to say what I had to say. I honestly didn't know any better; I didn't know I offended people. But I guess I was like a child. If I didn't like something, it was all over my face.

I'm comfortable now about what I say and do. I know who I am. But when it's all said and done, don't look for all the answers in my words. Just give me a chance to play my drums. Watch me work. That tells you everything about Bernard Purdie that you ever need to know.

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by Roy Burns

Drumming And Self-Discipline

To some people, self-discipline is a term that carries unpleasant connotations. It may mean "forcing" yourself to do something you hate to do. It may also mean suppressing feelings or ideas, because they are not acceptable to someone else. To me, self-discipline is generally the result of doing something because you *love* to do it. For example, if you have an important audition with a really hot band, exhibiting the self-discipline required for getting out of bed on time will be no problem. You will probably be awake before the alarm goes off, because you *want* to be there on time.

Drummers sometimes say things like: "I hate to practice. I just don't have the self-discipline to do it every day." What this attitude suggests to me is that drummers who feel this way most likely never had the benefit of an imaginative teacher. Imaginative teachers present practice ideas that are both fun and challenging. When something is fun to do, the self-discipline part becomes easy. If it isn't for you, don't be too quick to blame yourself. If you are taking lessons and the practice ideas being presented are dull, boring, and irrelevant, check with some other students. Find out what they are practicing. Maybe you need a teacher who is more creative and more in tune with what your needs are. It never hurts to do a little research.

Self-discipline also relates to equipment. Is your equipment in good shape? Are the pedals well oiled? Are your drums clean? Do you have good cases? If you are using electronic equipment, it has to be maintained; there is nothing more frustrating on a concert than an electronic failure. One worn cord that should have been repaired or replaced can render a good piece of gear useless.

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Self-discipline cannot be developed by deliberately doing things you hate to do. However, by realizing that something truly is necessary, you can minimize much of the resistance and agony in the situation. For example, you *do* have to have a driver's license, and in order to get it, you *do* have to take the test. Most of us don't enjoy the procedure, but we realize that it is necessary.

Self-discipline is the cornerstone of responsibility. We all know people who are always late, always unprepared, always borrowing money, and always forgetting appointments. "Always" is a strong word, but when you think about it, it is always the same people who are late or who have overslept. If the group you are in is to be successful, everyone will have to show up at rehearsals on time. This must be understood, because although playing clubs and concerts is fun, if the rehearsals are not productive, then most likely there will be fewer gigs and fewer concerts.

If you hope to be a successful musician, people must be able to count on you. They must view you as a responsible professional. If you get a reputation for being "unreliable," you can forget about studio work: Too much money is at stake. Producers will hire someone they know they can count on. Remember, there are a lot of great players who *are* responsible.

The idea is to make self-discipline work *for* you, instead of struggling against the idea of it. For example, make a list of the things you would like to accomplish in the music business. Next, make a list of the things you will most likely have to do in order to achieve your goals. Then, make a list of things that you can start working on right away. If *you* choose what it is you want to do and *you* decide how to go about it, then self-discipline is no problem. Almost all of us will work just a little harder to do things our own way.

Update your lists from time to time. Music changes, your needs change, trends change—everything changes. This is the reason for keeping your goals up to date. Discipline involves thinking and planning. It requires making the effort to think about what you do before you do it.

A list does one other valuable thing. It makes what you are planning to do "visible." You can look at the things you have to do and number them in order of importance. If you try to keep all of it in your head, you most likely won't remember everything. For example, if you go for your first drum lesson with a new teacher, make a list of questions you would like to ask. In this way, you are organized, and you won't have to be disturbed later because you "forgot" to ask something.

I have heard it said about music that: "The rules free you. They do not restrict you." I believe this is true in the sense that, if you know the "rules" of music, you have unlimited choices. Your options are wide and varied. If you don't know the rules, then your choices are more limited. It's up to you to decide how free you want to be.

Self-discipline also involves being organized. It's the ability to keep your checkbook in order so that you don't bounce checks. It means remembering to buy gas so that you don't run out on the way to the club. It means making a list of things you have to do that day. It means making a list of tunes, or a list of managers or record companies to contact. It means remembering to buy drumsticks and drumheads. In other words, "organization" takes the "drudgery" out of self-discipline. Through self-discipline, you become "self-organized."

In business, I have learned that discipline and organization are everything. The same is true for any top band on tour. I always carry a pad and pen in my briefcase, because I have to remember appointments, names, phone numbers, and addresses. On tour, the band has airline tickets, hotel reservations, sound checks, equipment checks, and interviews to deal with. None of this can happen without discipline and organization. (If you are studying music in college, take a few business courses as well. They will show you ways to become organized.)

Self-discipline is the by-product of doing something you want to do or something you understand you must do. Organization is the result of self-discipline. Confidence is the result of organization. A relaxed attitude is the result of confidence, and fun is the result of a relaxed attitude. Have fun!

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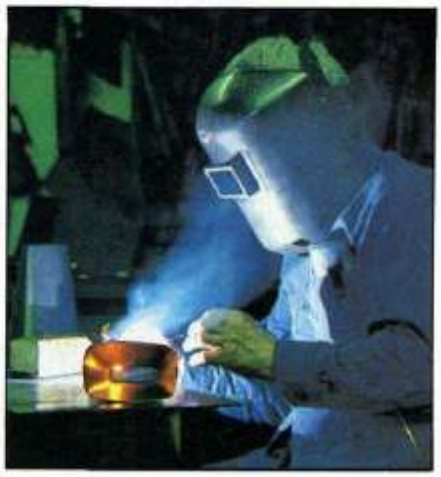

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Electronic Kits: Part 4

Simmons SDS9

Simmons has topped itself again with the introduction of the *SDS9* kit. The *SDS5,* which I reviewed four years ago, had the facilities to store four different-sounding kits. The new *SDS9* is capable of storing *40* drumkits in memory—and at a lower price!

The Simmons people have done some detailed R&D for the *SDS9.* The pads themselves have black air-floating surfaces for a much more comfortable feel. They also have formed rims, which are playable as well. Due to their new construction, the *SDS9* pads have a lower-pitched acoustic sound than the older models. Each pad still contains a piezo transducer, but in the case of the snare pad, there are two—one for the surface and one for the rim. This special pad, when mated with the *SDS9* brain and a stereo cable, can give regular snare batter sounds, plus rimshots and cross-stick sounds when you play on the rim. (The snare pad has a grey "O" in the Simmons logo to distinguish between it and the regular one-pickup drum pads in the kit.)

The method of pad mounting has changed, too. Each pad still has interior open jaws to accept 7/8" tubing, but now relies on recessed drum-key operated screws on the pad playing surface to secure the pad to the holder arm. The bass drum pad still uses the large, tubular spiked legs, which are set into their pad shell receivers with T-handle bolts. The locking method must have changed some, however, as the legs seem a lot sturdier and more twist-free than before. A large, rubber-covered piece of steel is attached to the bottom of the pad for pedal mounting.

The *SDS9* drum voices are a mixture: The toms are analog synthesized, the bass drum is software-generated, and the snare/rim voices are real digital sounds (snare hit, rimshot, and cross-stick) blown into EPROMs. EPROMs are delicate silicon chips, and the name stands for "erasable programmable read-only memory." The chip's memory consists of numbers that represent a musical tone or waveform. EPROMs are available in various memory sizes (2K, 4K, 8K, 16K, 32K). The larger the EPROM, the more numbers it can store, and thus the longer sound it can produce. Data on a programmed EPROM can be erased by exposing the chip to ultraviolet light. It's then possible to reprogram it. An EPROM is a very fragile creature, and one must use care not to bend or break off its tiny mounting legs. When this happens, the EPROM is no good.

A cover plate in the brain's cabinet face protects the mounted EPROMs. These three EPROMs can be removed arid replaced by others, but since they are not mounted in ZIF (Zero Insertion Force) sockets, the utmost care must be used not to bend the legs. Simmons' Library Of Sounds has a large range of programmed EPROMs, or you can burn your own sounds into EPROMs with the help of the Simmons *EPB Sampler.*

As I said earlier, the *SDS9* has 40 selectable drumkits, 20 of which are factory presets, while the other 20 are user-programmable. The various kits are grouped off in banks (A-B-C-D) with five kits in each bank. Pressing both selector buttons for bank and kit at the same time gets you into user-tailored kits (which, for ease of explanation, I'll call AA-DD). The preset kits cannot be programmed over. If you try, the unit will read out "NO" in its LED window. The separate drumkits within a given bank may also be selected via a footswitch, rather than the panel button, but the banks themselves (A-D or AA-DD) *cannot* be selected with this footswitch. For this, you must press the Bank Select button directly at the brain. However, the footswitch can be programmed to sequence particular kits.

When programming your own kit sounds, a row of program-variable controls allows you to set the parameters for a particular voice. (These controls do not affect the presets.)

There are six channels on the *SDS9* brain, corresponding to the drum voices. Simmons analyzed the sound of a bass drum with a computer, and broke it down into two parts: click and thump. Bass drum variables control click pitch, thump, click length, thump length, and click/thump balance. The control dials allow different ranges to be set for each component.

The snare drum channel variables are filter pitch, filter sweep, snare PROM pitch, noise level, pitch bend, decay, snare/rim balance, and filter resonance. The rim controls are for PROM pitch, PROM select (cross-stick or snares-off rimshot), pitch bend, decay, and noise level. With independence between snare and rim sounds, it's possible to have a wide range of combinations between the two. By the way, since the pad rim is playable, hitting both the pad surface and rim will give both snare and rim sounds simultaneously.

The three toms have adjustable parameters controlling filter pitch, filter sweep, tone pitch, pitch bend, decay, click level, and noise/tone balance. The *SDS9* offers two nice options for the tom-tom voices. One is a "second skin" switch, which will simulate the resonance and harmonics of a double-headed drum. The other feature is the capability to copy the parameters of one tom-tom to the other two automatically, making only changes in relative pitch. This is very useful when you've programmed in a great sound and want to duplicate the texture on the other two drums; one push of a button does it all. (This is certainly a lot easier than trying to get acoustic toms to match!)

All channels have LEDs to signify programming or pad-trigger. Each channel has its own sensitivity control and its own volume control. There is also a Mix control for adjustment of all channel volumes simultaneously.

We've only covered half of the *SDS9*'s buttons so far. There is another row (push buttons this time) on the left of the brain's face. The *SDS9* will access three different modes, all with their own functions, depending on which buttons you push.

The Play mode allows playing of the pads, of course. Pressing the Button Tap button while in Play mode allows you to sample each voice in a chosen kit without manually striking the pads. Now the six remaining buttons in the row are the six drum voices: rim, hi tom, med tom, low tom, snare, and bass. Press the corresponding button, and you'll hear that voice as it appears in the kit you've selected. The Auto-Trigger button will start a cycle that

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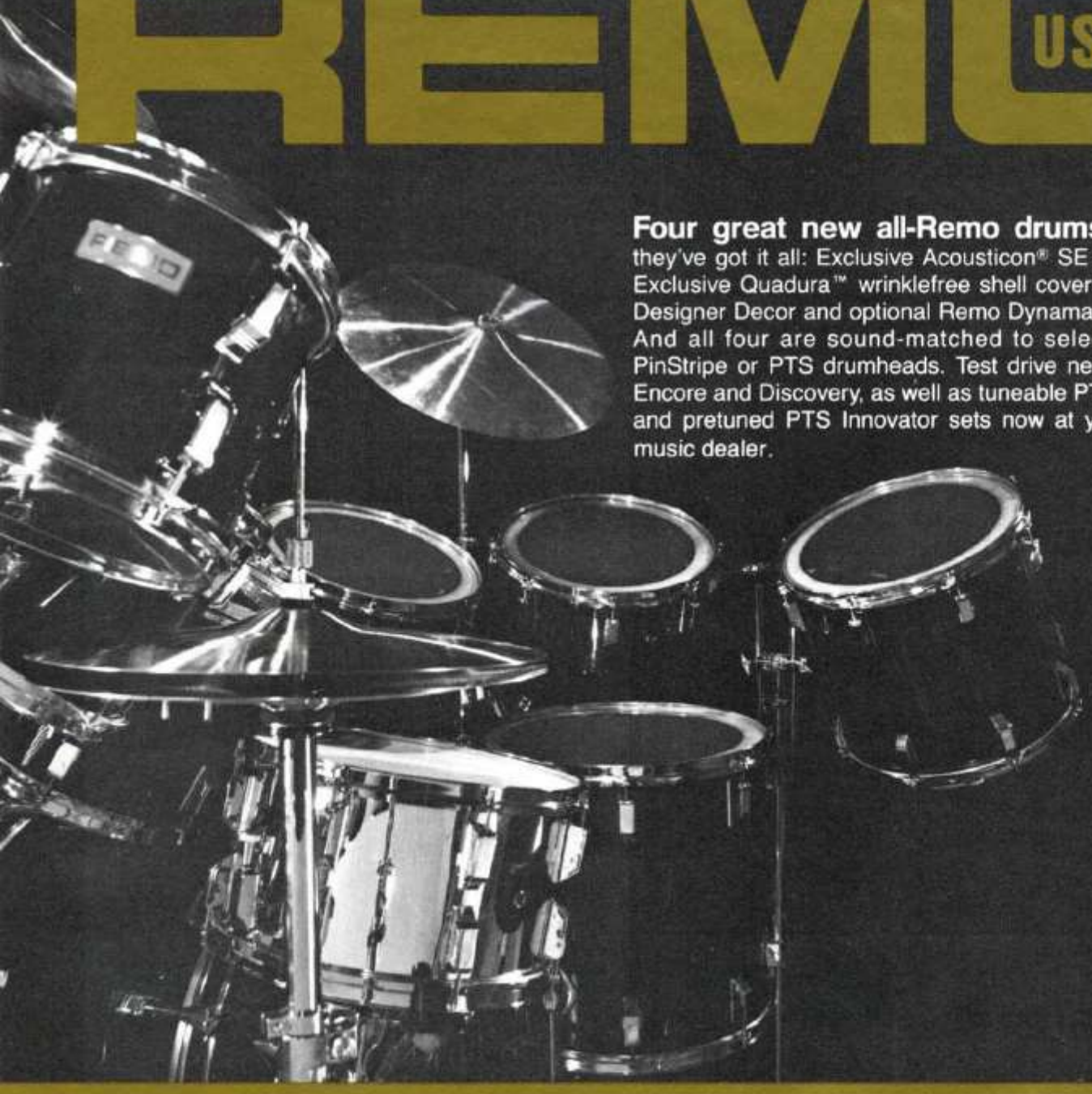

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triggers each drum voice in succession. Speed and volume dynamics can be adjusted. The *SDS9* will also auto-trigger in four variations during programming: each voice in turn, one single voice at a constant dynamic, one single voice with a rising dynamic, or snare/rim combination plus cycling around the three toms. As a final feat, the *SDS9* can auto-demo itself when you press the correct buttons. Also, while in Play mode, you may verify memory, load memory from tape, or dump memory to tape.

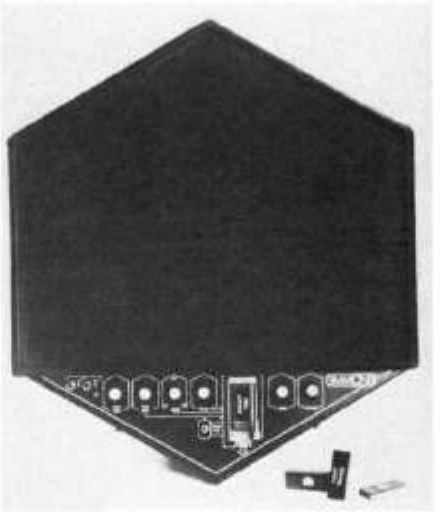
The *SDS9's* Program mode switches the button functions so you may select the voice you want to program, save the voice, or store the entire kit you've just programmed into the memory bank. The buttons for "second skin" option and for copying tom voices are also in this group. The *SDS9* has another feature, which is a first for any electronic kit: built-in, programmable echoes for any channel—either slapback or long repeat. Echo speed/delay and echo length can be adjusted. I like this feature very much, since it enables "studio effect" sounds to be created without the added cost of an outboard digital delay.

The third mode is for MIDI, and all the push buttons now become MIDI controllers. The MIDI interface allows connection with external synths, sequencers, drum machines, etc., for triggering either to or from the *SDS9.* (The *SDS9* manual goes into detailed explanation of the MIDI process; to explain it here would take a separate article!)

The *SDS9* brain has separate 1/4" pad inputs and outputs, as well as a 1/4" mix output, and a 1/4" stereo output (the drums are pre-panned). There are also 8-pin jacks for MIDI in and out, tape dump/load, and *SDS6* sequencer input. Simmons has finally incorporated a most-needed feature on the *SDS9*—a headphone jack—something all its past units never had! The brain itself is free-standing, but it can be rack-mounted, if desired. (Simmons has ears available for this.) All cables are included for hookup, but hardware is not. The pads are available in five colors: red, white, blue, yellow, and black. Simmons does have double/triple floor stands available in black finish at $95 each. Simmons also has the *Ultimate Drum Rack,* which holds all pads on a surrounding metal frame ($230 without mounting arms). Extensions are available to go beyond the area of a normal five-piece setup. Lastly, software is available to link the *SDS9* with a Commodore *64* computer.

The *SDS9* is meant to reproduce drum sounds, not wild sound effects (which is a good thing, since I, for one, am tired of trains, laser guns, and the like). I cannot find anything to criticize about the *SDS9* sounds; they're all just fabulous. From rock to reggae to heavy metal, the appropriate sounds are all there, crisp and clean. The brain is logically laid out, and programming of voices is accomplished quite easily. (I do have some doubts, however, regarding the durability of the snare pad's rim over long-term usage, but I guess time will tell.)

The *SDS9* is remarkable in its functions and its sounds, but perhaps its most remarkable feature is its price. At $1,995—almost half the price of the original *SDS5*—you can be the owner of 40 different drumkits, plus all the various options and features I've talked about in this review.



Simmons SDSI

The *SDSI* is Simmons' answer to those who only want one or two electronic pads added into their setups. The *SDSI* is self-contained and is battery-powered (or powered by an AC adaptor). It has the usual black-surfaced, hexagonal shape (though not the new pad construction like the *SDS9),* and has all sound modifier controls at the bottom section of the pad.

The *SDSI* sound is contained in an interchangeable digital EPROM, which, along with the control knobs, is protected by a removable cover. The EPROM is mounted in a ZIF socket for easy removal/replacement. The *SDSI* is capable of only one sound at a time, that being the one programmed into the PROM you've chosen. As with the *SDS9,* you can draw from Simmons' Library Of Sounds, or create your own personal chips by using the *EPB.* Since certain sounds require larger memory, the *SDSI* has a selector switch for 64- and 128-size chips. This switch also gives a longer or shorter sound length. For example, when using the "Bass Riff" EPROM, only half of the pattern is heard when set at 64. Switching to 128 gives the complete riff pattern. In the case of a snare EPROM, the 128 setting repeats the sound once, while 64 gives the snare sound one time only.

Variable control knobs are for volume, pitch, pitch bend up/down, and sensitivity. Two other knobs control Simmons' unique Run Generator. When using the Run Generator, each consecutive strike yields a lower pitch. By using the Run Time and Run Amount controls, you can set the speed of descending pitch, as well as the interval between the highest and lowest note of the run. This is especially good for imitating multi-tom fills from the single *SDSI* pad. The *SDSI* can also be externally triggered by microphones, click tracks, sequencers, etc.

The batteries that power the unit are located inside of the pad shell and are turned "on" when the cable end is inserted into the 1/4" jack. Simmons claims 30 hours of battery life under normal usage, but remember, you can use an AC adaptor instead. Three shell colors are available: black, red, or white. The *SDSI* also comes with a ratchet-mount arm and adaptor clamp to mount the pad on an existing cymbal or drum stand.

The Simmons sound library currently has 65 different PROMs, so you'll probably be able to find the sound you want for your *SDSI.* If not, blank EPROMs are available in packs of six, so you can sample your own sounds. (The *EPROM Blower* retails at $795.) I heartily recommend having the "Bass Riff" chip in your collection of sounds. I found it to be great for soloing—just like having a bass player with you, accenting and playing against your solo— and a lot of fun! But Simmons has tons of drum and percussion sounds as well. A cassette is available that demonstrates every sound in this library.

If you're not ready to purchase a complete Simmons kit, the *SDSI* is a great unit for adding another sound into your setup. Of course, there's nothing wrong with using a multiple *SDSI* setup, either! Retail: $365.00.

drums

From Sweden comes the latest in digital electronic drumkits. ddrums utilize digitally sampled sounds on interchangeable sound cartridges. Unlike EPROMs, these cartridges have their mounting legs encased, making removal and replacement much safer. Over 100 different sound cartridges are currently available. However, unlike Simmons, the ddrum cartridges do not allow user-sampling. There will be more on these sound cartridges later.

The basic five-piece ddrum kit contains three 10" round tom-tom pads, one 12" round snare pad, a very unique bass drum, and a modular brain. The tom and snare

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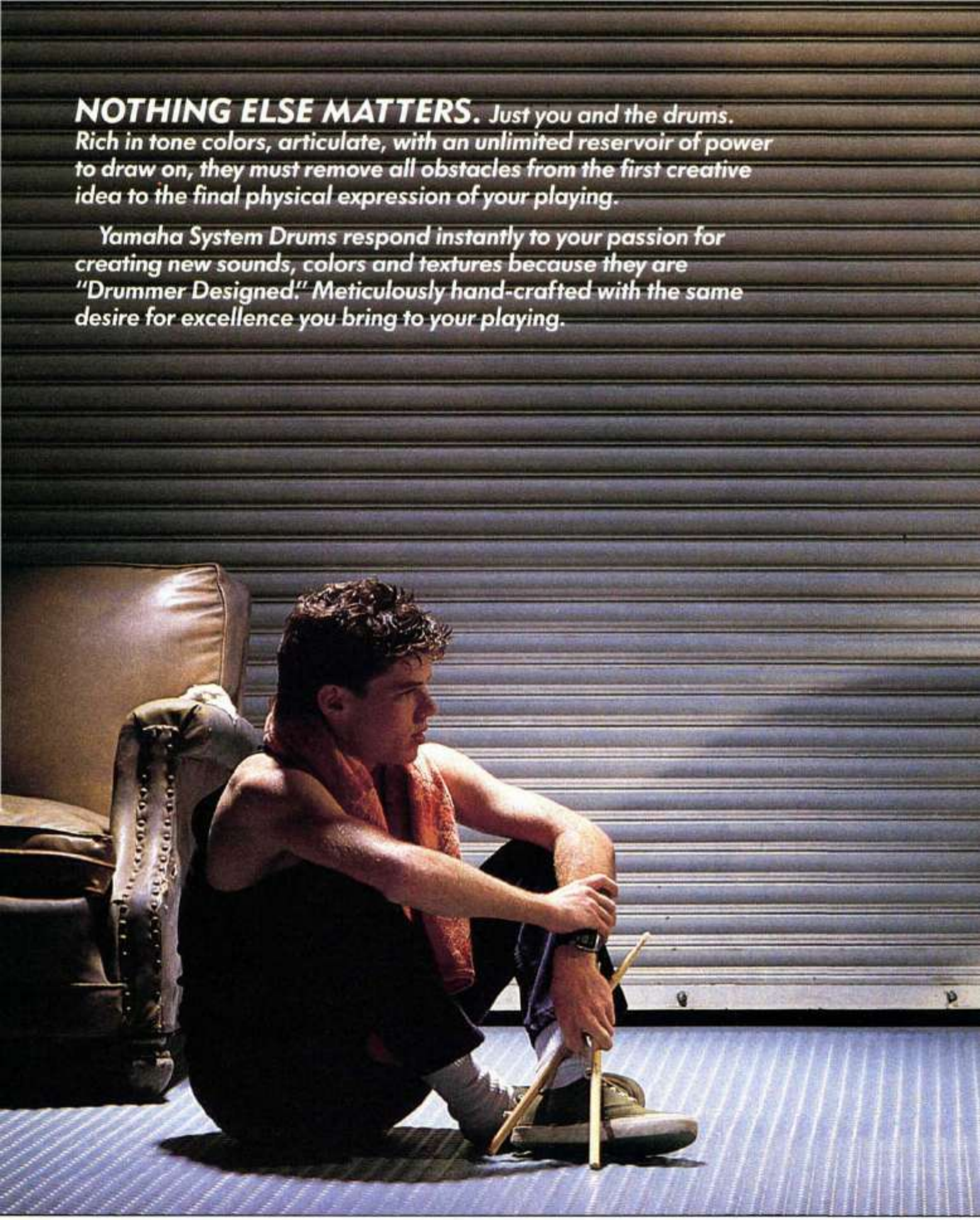

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pads all have real drumheads (Remo coated *Ambassadors),* real metal hoops, and are fully tensionable with a drum key. The drumheads are mounted atop foam discs inside the shells. The tom-tom pads have receiver brackets to allow mounting on any standard L-arm holder; the snare pad will mount onto a regular snare stand.

As with the *SDS9,* the ddrum kit has a special snare pad. It uses two modules—one for snare batter, one for rim. The snare rim itself is sonically independent of the snare head, allowing for individual sounds. Two XLR sockets are located underneath the pad shell. (The other pads have one XLR jack each.)

Most other electronic kits have a large bass drum pad, which takes up a sizable amount of space and only serves a cosmetic purpose. ddrum realized this and constructed a radically new pad design for the bass drum. The bass drum is free-standing, and utilizes a steel base plate and steel post, welded together at a 45° angle. Adjustable screw-type anchoring spurs are fitted onto the base to prevent sliding. The striking post has a replaceable cushion-mounted rubber head. Amazingly enough, looks *can* be deceiving, as the ddrum bass drum has a *great* feel to it, with a little bit of "give" (due to the cushioning of beater impact), and it responds like a regular bass drum batter head. This is one innovation that works as well as, if not better than, the instrument it's modeled after.

The ddrum brain is rack-mounted in a flight case. The basic rack contains six pad voice modules and one power module. It is expandable to eight modules, or to seven modules plus a powered mixer module. Each voice module is identical, having controls for pitch, pitch dynamics sensitivity, decay, treble (high-end boost/cut), and bass (low-end boost/cut). Each module has a screw-based trim pot for adjustment of pad sensitivity, as well as a trigger LED. There are two push buttons on each module that allow selection of up to four sounds from a single cartridge (if that cartridge is multi-sound). There are no volume controls, since each module must be separately outputted to an outboard mixing console (unless, of course, you get the optional mixer module, which has a single mix output).

The pitch sensitivity control duplicates what happens when a conventional drum is struck soft or hard: The drum pitch is altered, depending on attack. The amount of pitch alteration can be varied, or can be exaggerated by turning the control all the way up. A single pad can sound almost a one-octave range, depending on the pressure applied when the pad is struck. Increased stick pressure yields higher pitches. Actually, if desired, a multi-tom fill can be simulated on one ddrum pad by varying the degree of stick attack!

The rear of each module has a 1/4" trigger input for use with the drum pads (or other sources), 1/4" and XLR audio output jacks, and a cartridge port to accept the sound cartridge. The cartridges themselves measure approximately 2 3/4"x1 1/2", and are keyed for correct insertion into the module port. There are two grades of cartridges—"B" and "C" (16K and 32K)—and a single cartridge can contain anywhere from one to four digital sounds. Some sounds are pure, and some have studio effects added on. I've been informed that all the ddrum sounds were recorded digitally on tape in a recording studio by well-known Swedish drummers with their own drumkits. The tapes are taken back to the ddrum lab, analyzed on computers, scopes, etc., and then each sound is compressed differently. Some examples of the resulting separate cartridges are: 10", 12", 14"Sonor toms, 8", 10", 12", 14" Yamaha toms, echo snare, kick, handclap, timpani, echo kick, etc.

Any sound cartridge may be plugged into any module; one does not need to follow a specific channel arrangement. Whatever cartridge you insert is the sound you'll get from the corresponding pad. Certain parameters are adjusted by the module controls, allowing you to tailor the sounds to suit your needs. Also, a cartridge with four sounds in it allows instant call-up of any one of them, giving you immediate access to four different sound variations. Each sound cartridge retails for $110 to $175—not cheap by any means. The basic five-piece ddrum kit comes with six pad-to-module cables, but does not include cables to go from module output to mixer. Pad shells are available in black or white.

I did not get to hear every cartridge available, but from the ones I did test, the sounds were realistic and exact. One thing I've noticed about digital drum sounds is that you are hearing a studio-recorded sound, as on a record album. The "uninitiated," shall we say, sometimes have trouble dealing with the fact that the drum sounds are coming from something other than the living, breathing, vibrating, acoustic, live drum that they are accustomed to. This can cause doubt in their minds as to whether or not the sounds truly *are* realistic. (The same reaction was probably felt towards the first Fender bass!)

At any rate, all the sounds were perfect, clear reproductions of their original sound source models. I was very impressed with all the sounds I heard, and I'll dare to say that the ddrum kit has the most authentic sound of all the digital drum makers, be they drum computers or drumkits. There is nothing "electronic-sounding" about the ddrums; they are pure, natural, studio drum sounds, and I can imagine that they might be difficult to tell apart from real drums in a studio environment. For live use, high-quality amplification is needed in order to produce the best possible sound. I'm so enchanted with these sounds that I hope ddrum sees fit to develop a single pad *a la* Simmons *SDS1*!

The ddrums have been sold in Europe since 1983, and are just now breaking into the U.S. market through distribution by Guild Musical Instruments. The construction is solid, and the genuine feel is there, thanks to the real heads and hoops. The digital sounds are precise, and, as I said, incredibly real. The only drawback may be the price—$4,500 without stands—but I suppose it's a matter of "getting what you pay for," from a price/quality standpoint. Studios, pro players, and others willing to spend the extra money will get a fully digital drumkit with quite unbelievable sound and response.

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Photo by Michael Jachles

***Chouinard** continued from page 17*

"Whadda You Want From Me," where the interaction between drums and guitar has almost a conversational quality. The juxtaposition of spaces and pauses on that track seems reminiscent of John Bonham's playing.

BC: Again, I can't take all the credit for that one. Billy really came up with it. It's funny. When Billy started writing songs for that album, he wrote in a certain genre. Since I go out to a lot of clubs, I've got a pretty good handle on what's going on musically. It's important to be aware of what's happening and what people are getting into. I mentioned to Billy at the time that he might try writing a song in the vein of "Another One Bites The Dust," so he wrote "The Stroke." I also suggested doing something with a Judas Priest feel to it, and he wrote "Whadda You Want From Me." The structure and the spacings on that were his idea. He had come to rehearsal with a pattern in his head. That song is another tune that was written entirely around the drums.

As far as the parallels to Bonham go, he really wasn't an influence on me. People have made the comparison in the past, but the connection has more to do with Billy than what I'm actually sounding like. Billy does sound a bit Robert Plant-ish, so sometimes there's the association that I sound like Bonham. You see, Zeppelin was a major influence on him, but not on me.

TS: "The Big Beat" is a song that's built around *you.* Your bass drum is really open, very resonating—a huge sound.

BC: I got that sound in the studio just by using my kit and hitting hard. My studio setup consists of two floor toms, one rack tom, a snare, and a bass drum. That's it. I use five drums because that's all I require, plus I'm basically too lazy to play any more drums than that. I mean, I use that second floor tom as an ashtray. [laughs] I must have hit that a total of three times.

TS: Contrastingly, you achieved a hammering type of effect on "Take A Look Behind You."

BC: On "Take A Look Behind You," the producer, Jim Steinman, came up with that approach. He got the idea from "Heard It Through The Grapevine," where it's all floor tom. Instead of using the hi-hat throughout, I'm just playing time on the floor tom, then going into the hi-hat in the second verse, and then adding cowbell.

TS: How did you come up with that distinctive "whooshing" snare

in "The Stroke"?

BC: It's just a recording technique that's been used. We took a 24-track machine, flipped the tape over, and played it backwards. After we recorded the song regularly, I went into a room with a snare drum miked up—just a snare. I heard the whole song backwards through the headphones. It was all in time, just in reverse. There are no drum fills in that song at all, so we just recorded my snare part, hitting on the beat, turned the tape back to its regular position, and got that decay of the snare drum. That's where the "shhh" sound comes from. I think I did it three times to make it as fat as possible. It was pretty easy.

TS: When you play that song live, how do you duplicate the backwards decay?

BC: First of all, we play that song a bit faster live, so it's not quite as dramatic as the original. Alan, our keyboard player, has a white-noise button on his Prophet. We'll start the song, and on the bass drum beat, he'll use the white-noise effect. I'll play the backbeat, but he creates the actual sound. There's no way we could get that decay effect *before* I hit it, so we have to compensate for that.

TS: Many of the songs begin with a guitar riff, synthesizer, or a sampled sound, rather than a drumbeat. Perhaps that lends even more attention to you when you do come in.

BC: Again, that has a lot to do with the way Billy writes the tunes. He tries to set everything up to get the maximum excitement. It's like a tease. On some of the songs, he'll bring drums in where you would least expect them. It will start out simply. Then, we'll really go for it. It's not predictable. It's just musical intuition.

TS: You've worked with some pretty illustrious producers. Did their drum treatments ever differ from the approach that you and Billy had?

BC: I'll tell you the truth: The three different producers we've been involved with haven't really played any major part whatsoever concerning my role. We're extremely well rehearsed before we go into the studio. Billy is really the producer, and the other people back there are an extra set of ears. There are times when they make suggestions, but the five of us do just about everything in preproduction. We rarely have the producer with us in the studio—hardly *ever.* Jim Steinman came in a couple of times, but as for revamping any songs, the producers just don't. We are so prepared before we enter the studio that there's no guesswork involved.

TS: Is the process of making a record enjoyable for you?

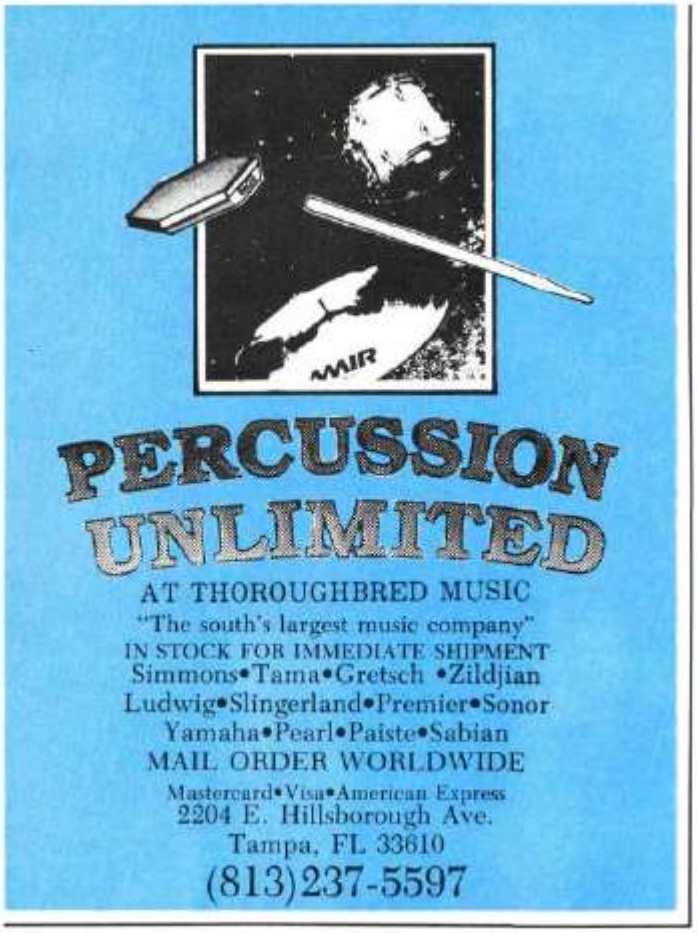
BC: To me, being in the studio is just the vehicle. First and foremost, I consider myself a performer. I love to perform. As for making records, I've had some less than terrific times working for other people. A lot of the time, it's too serious and the element of fun is missing. I take it so seriously that I *don't* take it seriously. I think that's where people lose perspective in the sense that they forget what this idiom is all about. It's just rock 'n' roll, and it should be fun. Playing live is really where it's at for me. The studio is great when I'm done working in it. It took me seven days to do my tracks for *Emotions In Motion,* eight days for *Don't Say No,* and eight for *Signs Of Life.* After my part is down, I'm not back in the studio until the very end to do maybe a cowbell overdub or something. By the same token, those seven or eight days I am spending in there are very pressured, because if I don't do it then, we're in big trouble. When those last songs are done, I can walk out and say, "Have a good time guys," and leave them to their adjustments or extra overdubs. Sometimes, the guys will call me up from the studio at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning and say, "Why don't you come down, Bob?" I'll say, "That's okay. Do your keyboard overdubs." I don't want to be anywhere near the place. It's kind of nice when you do remove yourself from it, and then go back in and hear the rough mixes after everything else is done. It's exciting again. We rehearse about six or seven hours per day during our preproduction period, so we've been around those songs a long time.

TS: How long does that preproduction phase usually last?

BC: Well, on *Signs Of Life,* we had a big problem with our producers. Mutt Lange was supposed to do it, but he was doing The Cars album and was still involved with that when we were supposed to begin, which was in November. He still wasn't finished in December, and by the time he was finally finished, he probably wasn't ready to go back in the studio again. We suffered in the sense that we went through three different time periods of preproduction. We had been ready to record in November, and then found out that we weren't going to England to record. Then, there were another couple of weeks of rehearsals and we were set to go, but it was postponed again. Then, we found out that Mutt wasn't going to do it. There was another three-week preproduction period in February, and then we had to postpone again. Rehearsals are crucial in that you can't walk away from songs for a month, and expect to go into the studio and record them. They have to be fresh in your mind. That incident with *Signs Of Life* was a real drag. To have to do those songs through three weeks of rehearsal, three weeks of preproductions, then a month off of not knowing what was going on, and then a few more weeks of rehearsals was like making the album four times.

TS: Let's go back and talk about when you started playing.

BC: I started playing when I was 12, after taking piano lessons for a year, which I enjoyed. My mother and father had a little player piano that I loved to use. I had really been into the Dave Clark Five and the keyboard player in that group had a Vox *Continental* keyboard, which I thought was very cool. I wanted to be just like him. My parents couldn't afford to buy me one, since they were pretty expensive back then. Anyway, to tell you the truth, I really started out fooling around, playing on tables and *Styrofoam* boxes. My first drumset was a snare and a bass drum that my father saw in the classified ads. He payed $25 for that big old bass drum—a 30" marching bass drum. I wish I still had it today. It probably would be worth a fortune. The snare was a Leedy snare—the catgut snares circa 1964 or '65. My parents were real smart, because they knew that, if I could put up with playing that $25 set—it was not a heavy investment at all to them—I could graduate to a better set. So, the following Christmas I got my father to buy me a real drumset, and it was all downhill from there. [laughs]



I played in some junior high school bands, and by 14, I was playing nightclubs in the area. I'd see my science teacher sitting in the audience sometimes. It was great. I would play four nights a week, Thursday through Sunday, five sets a night. I missed a lot of school, but I knew even then what my priorities were. I knew that I wanted to be successful. I was totally self-taught, and I stole from the best. My brother, who is ten years older than me, was a big influence. He was always playing those Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis records, and without being aware of it, I was heavily influenced by that music. He would take me along to all the clubs he was going to, and I'd just stand and watch. I was totally enamored with it all. I was going to these places, seeing every band that I possibly could, plus I was always practicing as a kid—hours upon hours of practice.

TS: Timekeeping just came naturally to you?

BC: Well, you see, in those days, no one thought about timekeeping. I mean, you listened to Rolling Stones records with Charlie Watts all over the place, but who cared? What was time? No one really thought about it. I just loved to perform.

TS: What type of material were you covering in the early days?

BC: The bands that I played in when I was in junior high did a lot of dances, so it was all soul stuff, really—also, a lot of Vanilla Fudge and Young Rascals, which were really popular bands at the time. We also did Sam & Dave, Sly & The Family Stone—all great music. It's a drag that kids these days don't have those influences.

TS: Which drummers were an inspiration for you at that time?

BC: Don Brewer from Grand Funk Railroad has always been an idol of mine. That was my favorite band when I was growing up, and I stole a lot of things from him. When he did Bob Seeger's last tour, I had the pleasure to meet him, and he said that he was a fan of *mine,* which made me feel really good. I also love Charlie Watts, Ringo, Carmine, Dino Danelli—all those guys. In a certain respect, I've incorporated all of their strengths into my playing, which has made me a conglomeration of their styles. As far as drummers go, I like the songs themselves—the grooves. I love Def Leppard. The incident with Rick Allen losing his arm really destroyed me. I mean, here was a kid with tremendous talent, and for that to happen to him is devastating. Apparently, Bill Ludwig is making him a special kit. They're going to try to figure out a way that he can continue to play, which I think is wonderful.

TS: You were saying that you had a definite preference for playing live over recording. Does your frame of mind affect your live performance?

BC: Well, I'm the comic relief for the band. You can probably figure that out just by the way I live. But I really can't have any distractions before I play. Sleeping is the best thing for me. After the soundchecks, Billy and I go to our dressing rooms and sleep. Do you want to know what the best part of the show is for me? It's the walk up to the stage. To me, that's what it's all about. The actual playing is wonderful—doing the show itself. I could feel pretty ill, but as soon as the first band comes off the stage, the show must go on. It's always better for me to eliminate all distractions before I go on. We have a half-an-hour call, which is when I usually get dressed. Then I might go and watch the last song of the opening band and gauge the audience. I can pretty much tell what kind of a show it's going to be by the first song, as far as audience response goes. We're received well every night, and it's really great when 20,000 people know the words to our songs better than we do. [laughs]

TS: What do you look for in equipment?

BC: I endorse Ludwig, but *not* because I get them for free. My kit is a Ludwig because of the way I play and how hard I play. To me, they're the best drums. They're very dependable. I'd use them even if I had to pay for them.

My snare drums are made for me by a company in Memphis. Dennis Elliot, the drummer from Foreigner, introduced me to a man who customizes snares himself, and I had the chance to try them out. They sounded great. The one I use is about 10 x 14. It's like a parade snare. I have two or three snares that he's made for me.

My Ludwig kit consists of a 24" bass drum, one 12 x 14 rack tom, a 16 x 16 floor tom, and a 16x18 floor tom, which, as I said, I never really touch. In the studio, *all* the heads are on, including both bass drum heads. We like the drums to ring in the studio—to sound like *real* drums—so we leave the heads on. For live shows, we just cut out the front middle part to shove the mic's in.

On the last tour, the motif of our stage—the risers, the platforms—was a very obscure lavender type of color. I had wanted to get a drumset to match that color, so we sent a sheet of our stage color to Bill Ludwig III. Since Ludwig doesn't make that color, Bill sent my drums to Hamer Guitars in Chicago. Hamer painted my drums to match that shade. It's just a stock Ludwig set straight off the assembly line, but it's the only drumset of its kind due to its color.

TS: What about your cymbal setup?

BC: Cymbal-wise, I love Paiste. Again, I do endorse them, but that's the brand I'd use no matter what. When I'm playing live, I go for big cymbals: three 24" crashes and a 24" ride, a couple of smaller crashes—I'm not sure of the exact specifications—plus 15" *Sound Edge* hi-hats. In the studio, those 24" cymbals would spread over everything—they're much too loud—so when we're recording, I tend to use smaller cymbals. I have so many cymbals that I literally just pick up a different cymbal for just about every song, depending on what effect each song might require. I use so many cymbals in the studio that it would be impossible to keep track of everything I work with.

The funny thing about endorsing equipment is that, since I can afford to buy the stuff myself, the companies send it to me for free. When you're young, you'd use a hubcap or just about anything to provide a sound that was remotely good—whatever was available that you could afford. Then, when you play in a big rock band like this, you get it for free. It's very ironic.

TS: You seem to hit rather hard. What types of sticks and heads do you prefer?

BC: The sticks I use are Ludwig *3S.* They're like *Louisville Slug-*

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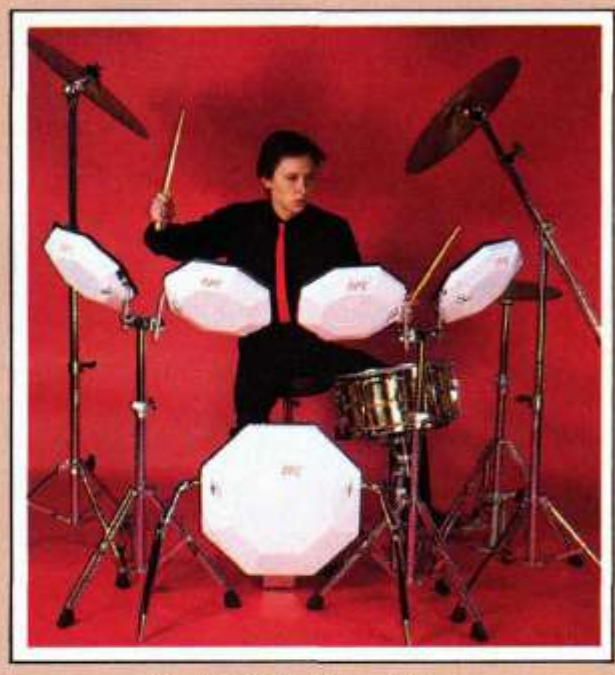

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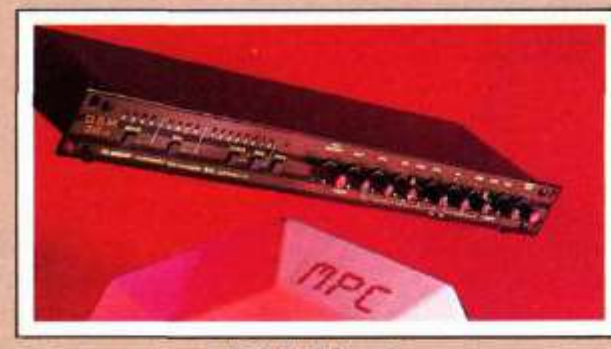

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gers—just about as hard as baseball bats. The heads I use are Remo *Ambassadors*—just stock heads. 1 don't break anything. In fact, I can't remember ever breaking any heads, even though I *do* hit hard. I don't crack cymbals either.

TS: Do you place much significance on the type of equipment you use in connection with your own personal sound?

BC: Drumming is certainly the drums themselves and all the equipment that goes with them, but 1 think it's really all in the touch. I'd like to think that I can make any drumset sound good. Whether it's a cheap set that I might use when I sit in with a band down in the Village, or a top-of-the-line kit, it's all in the touch.

TS: How particular are you about damping methods?

BC: Live, it's just a pillow with a mic' stand base in a cover inside the bass drum. There's no tape on the rest of the drums. It's all natural.

TS: Who tunes the drums in the studio, you or the engineer?

BC: Billy tunes the drums. He's really into all of that. He's like a little kid. I really don't have the patience for all that. It's not that I couldn't do it myself; it's just that he gets off on doing it, and it doesn't bother me in the least if I don't do it. Anyway, I'd rather be out in the lobby watching *The Jeffersons.* [laughs]

TS: What about live shows? I can't picture Billy tuning your kit before a gig.

BC: Oh, I do it. We do about five live shows a week when we're touring, so it becomes automatic. The drumset always sounds the same every night. Just like a Holiday Inn room—I don't want any surprises when I get up there. The roadies are great. They work with me, and they know what sound I want.

TS: It's obvious that you prefer to expend your energies on the playing of music rather than the preparation behind it.

BC: Yeah, definitely. I hate to rehearse. I don't practice. I'm certainly not what you would call a drummer's drummer. Except, when I do get on stage, I had better be great. And again, I think that I have been playing the drums long enough that I don't have to sit in the dressing room and do paradiddles or work with a practice pad for two hours. I just walk off the bus, catch a nap in the dressing room, then head for the stage, get out there, and do it.

TS: Ian Paice had mentioned that you were called in to replace him when he couldn't complete his sessions for Gary Moore's last album. What circumstances led to your involvement in this project?

BC: The connection goes back to Gary's manager, Stewart Young, who was Billy's manager at the time. I had met Gary in London about five years ago, and we hit it off really well. When Gary came to New York, he called me up and asked me to play on his demo. He took the demos back to London, eventually got a deal and asked me to join his band after recording his most recent album. I couldn't do it, because I wasn't going to leave this band. Gary's a sweet guy and a good friend. I love his music, but it wouldn't have been right. I ended up playing on one track on *Corridors Of Power.* That was fun. It was Gary's first album.

Last year, I got a call from Stewart Young. Gary was in the studio working on his record, and Stewart said that Ian wasn't going to be finishing it. He asked me what I was doing and I said, "Nothing." So I flew right out there, and six days later I was back home, having finished the rest of the album. The LP is called *Victims Of The Future,* and I played on six songs. No rehearsals—I just got off the plane and headed straight into the studio. It was great. I love that kind of a challenge. It's nice to be able to help your friends out. I just have an intuition with Gary, having worked with him, knowing the way he plays and what he wants to hear. I sort of helped to bail out the project for him.

Last May, Gary had the American tour coming up—he was opening for Rush—and again, I received another frantic phone call. At that time, Billy was mixing *Signs Of Life,* and our rehearsals for the tour weren't starting until July 5. Gary said, "Ian Paice is going back with Purple, and I need a drummer for my tour." I ended up putting in two rehearsals with Gary and spent two and a half months with him on the Rush tour. I had one day off and then had to start rehearsals for Billy Squier, but I love that. It

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was a great time, plus it was very rewarding. The first gig for Gary's tour was Albuquerque—a good place to work the kinks out. It went very well.

TS: Working with people that you get along well with is a priority of yours, isn't it?

BC: Absolutely. It's a necessity. I think everybody benefits, whether it be a session with total strangers or working with people that you've already met. Somebody has to break the ice, and it's usually me. For me, it's always been easier to be nice to people.

I don't do a lot of work with people that I don't know, but I have been in that situation. When I did Ted Nugent's last record, *Penetrator,* I hadn't previously met Ted and I hadn't really thought all that highly of his music in the past. I had gotten a call to do the album, along with Doug and Alan, from a friend at Atlantic Records. Ted had been a big fan of Billy Squier, so he wanted to use us on his records, which is very flattering. I had heard all these stories about Ted—wild man, crazy. He turned out to be the most considerate guy you would ever want to work with. It wasn't that I hadn't been looking forward to doing the record. It was just that I didn't know what to expect. It turned out to be a good record, and Ted's a friend for life.

TS: Although you utilize only acoustic drums with Billy Squier, have you ever played any electronic drums on sessions with other people?

BC: I think the whole fuss over electronic drums will prove to be a white elephant. I see it as just another trend. Sure, almost everybody is using them on records these days, but a couple of years down the road, people will be using them less frequently. Even now, acoustic drums are slowly becoming more prevalent in the wake of all the Simmons users out there. The electronic drum craze is trendy, and to me, going with a trend just for the sake of being trendy is an absolute waste of time.

If I was asked to use them on a Billy Squier record, I would do it. I don't really have anything against using them. But do you remember Syndrums from the early '70s? For a time, everybody was using them. Now, I can't remember seeing a Syndrum anywhere in the last four years. I just love the sound of true drums. Although, if someone wants to buy me a set of Simmons, I'll play them. [laughs] As far as drum machines go, I've never used those either, but I probably should learn to program them.

TS: In addition to recording with other musicians, you've begun to get involved with producing. How did that come about?

BC: Well, let's face it. I'm not getting any younger, and although I hope to be playing for many years—maybe indefinitely—there might be a time when the live gigs will be a thing of the past. So, I'm trying to hone my producing skills by working on as many projects as possible.

I've coproduced Scarlett Rivera, which was a fantastic experience because she's a violinist who never really sang on her own record before this. I'm very happy with that. I've also produced a friend of mine, Rio DeGennaro. Jeff Golub and Alan St. Jon also played on his demo tape. All of us will be going down to do a three-week stint at a club in Bermuda. Then we'll be recording an album, which I'll be producing. In addition to those projects, I'm also producing a band called Paris from Westchester County, plus another friend of mine by the name of Matt Tyme. Different projects keep my ears and chops sharp.

Like I said, I'm not a songwriter, but I love to arrange things. Actually, I'm pretty good at it. I'm getting better at doing those production tasks. I'll always be a drummer, but with production skills and experience, I'll always be sure that I can go into a studio at any point in time and be involved with the creation of good music.

TS: What would you cite as one of the high points of your career so far?

BC: That would have to be the first time I ever played the Boston Garden. The significance of that is that the Boston Garden was the first place I had ever seen a big rock 'n' roll show. I was 14 when I saw Grand Funk Railroad there. I remember sitting up in the stands thinking, "Bobby, if you play here someday, you'll have

made it." Although I've played bigger halls, that venue is certainly the most sentimental place for me. Now that I live in New York, Madison Square Garden is also a thrill. No matter how many times you've played there, it's always exciting.

TS: You seem to have retained the enthusiasm that you probably had when you first began playing.

BC: Well, I know that 1 haven't lost perspective. I think that, once you take yourself too seriously, you're in trouble. If your perspective is lost in the sense that you forget why you started playing in the first place—that boyish attitude, that enthusiasm—then you should find something else to do. You can't fool your audience, because it eventually shows in your work.

I enjoy it even more now because of the logistics of it all. I've gotten myself in a position where I don't *have* to play clubs, which I love to do. The logistics are just better now, because there's more freedom and more variety. It might be the Houston Astrodome one night and then a hole-in-the-wall cabaret in the Village the next.

TS: You appear to have lost some weight recently. You look different than you did on some of those earlier Squier videos. Has getting into better physical condition affected your endurance?

BC: Well, 1 used to weigh about 175 pounds, and through rigorous activities—being on the road, working a lot—it just gradually came off. I lost 35 pounds, and as far as playing and endurance go, I think I play better because I look better and feel better about myself. If I feel better about myself, I tend to have more stamina. 1 hadn't realized how bad 1 looked until I looked at those old videos one day and thought, "Wow, I can't believe that's me."

TS: Well, you're really keeping busy lately. Didn't you fly in from the Coast recently because of yet another project?

BC: I had gotten a call from Billy, because he had written a song for the soundtrack of the movie *St. Elmo's Fire.* Billy said, "Get ready to go to L. A. I'm doing the song out there with David Foster [producer of Chicago XVII], and we want you on it." It was a departure for both Billy and myself, because we played with Steve Lukather, Steve Porcaro, and David Paich—a group of totally new people. It was a great experience, and I had a great time, too.

TS: You've spoken about your drive to be successful. You mentioned that, even at an early age, you had a great desire to "make it." When you refer to success, what kind of achievements do you equate with success?

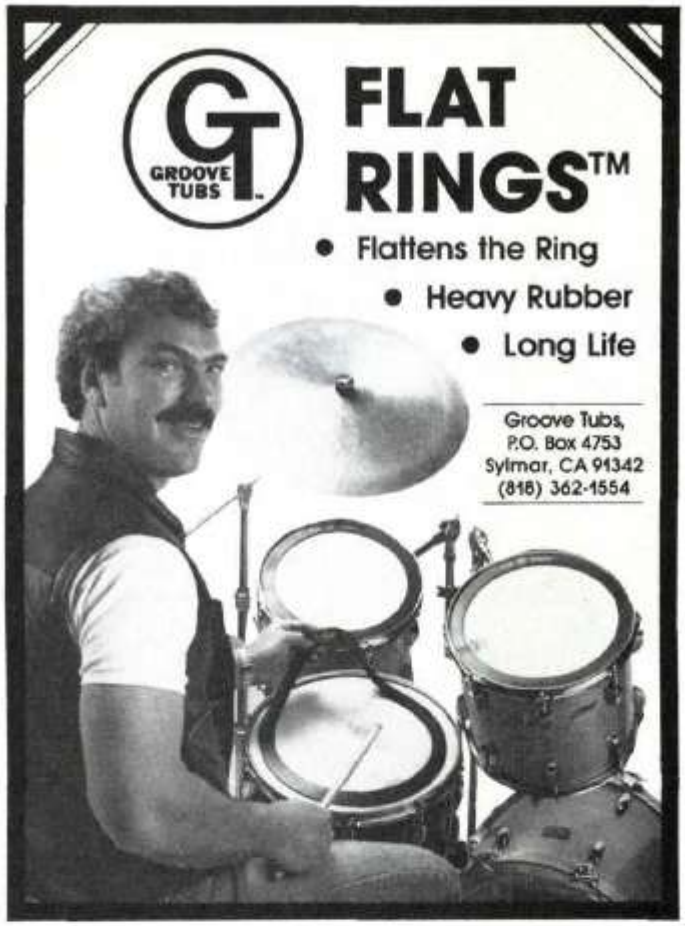
BC: Success is relative. When you don't have it, you crave it. To me, success is all the stereotypical things that come to mind: financial success, popularity, being recognized by your contemporaries—all those qualities that you would assume.

When I talked about my ambitions to make it in the business, what I meant was that I only really know how to do one thing—play the drums—so I wanted to be sure that I at least gave it my best shot. Then if it didn't happen for me, I would have had the satisfaction of knowing that I had tried—that I had taken a wholehearted stab at it.

TS: Is there a song that you think is most indicative of your individual style and sound—one that you might particularly like to be remembered for?

BC: The song I'm probably most proud of is "Eye On You" from *Signs Of Life.* I think that's a good example of my style, because it shows the gamut of my expressions. Another song called "Calley Oh" [*Tale Of The Tape*] is one I really feel good about. I love that one a lot.

Until I played with Billy, I had never made a record that I felt 1 had really nailed sound-wise. Whether it had to do with the groups I had been involved in, or the situations with the songs we were recording, I had just never shined as a drummer on record until I became involved with this band. I think it was the same for Billy as well. I've listened to some Piper records, and, well, I'm glad I didn't play on them. [laughs] Not to be rude or arrogant—I don't mean to put those guys down because I guess there are some good things on those records—but both Billy and I just seemed to come into our strides in this band. I guess it's just a match made in heaven.



by Jim Dinella

Ron Krasinski

Photo by Robert Marriner

Ron Krasinski is a member of that seemingly endless fraternity of talented but unheralded drummers, without whose skills most of today's popular recordings and live entertainment could not be produced. Not surprisingly, Ron has a strong and varied musical background, and a track record of work with top artists in several musical styles, as well as extensive studio experience. Currently touring with Melissa Manchester, Ron was holding down the drum chair in Sheena Easton's backup band recently when MD *had the opportunity to get his views on his current and past work, and on drumming in general.*

JD: Let's begin with a little background.

RK: I started out when I was about five years old, playing classical percussion: mallets, timpani, classical snare drum, that kind of thing. I was playing rock 'n' roll gigs when I was about 13 or 14. My parents were musical, so they started me very early. 1 learned to read music when I was very young.

JD: Who did you study with?

RK: I lived in New York for about six months when I was 18, and 1 studied with Jim Chapin. That was a very expanding experience. He explained the theory of playing and broke everything down. I just practiced the hell out of that stuff until it became natural. A lot of it had to do with centering my body. There's a point, in the middle of your back, which, if you learn to center on it, will make you feel very relaxed. It just extends all the way to your fingertips and feet.

1 went through a lot of the books: Jim's book, Joe Morello's book, and Stone's *Stick Control and Accents And Rebounds.* That last one was a killer; I loved that book. I got into playing jazz after a stint in the air force. I did three albums with Eric Kloss. Pat Martino was in on those, too, as were Barry Miles, Buster Williams, and Dave Holland. I moved to L.A. in 1973, and my first job was with Don Ellis. I was able to work with him, Roger Kellaway, and John Klemmer, because of my jazz background.

JD: What happened with percussion along the way?

RK: Well, it's still there. But I don't usually get called to do it. Now and then 1 do, if I'm already there playing drums, but I just never bothered to go further into it. I also wanted to get back to playing rock 'n' roll—back to my roots. I enjoy playing simple and hard, and putting as much intensity into *one* note as you would into 50.

JD: You've worked with Olivia Newton-John and Barry Manilow, among others.

RK: I toured with Olivia for six or seven months. She had just won a couple of Grammies, and was doing more country then. For Barry, I was called to do some recording. Barry's a great producer, and he's fun to work with in the studio—very contemporary. He writes good songs. I also played the Bottom Line with him in New York. Barry likes good musicians; he likes a person who can play more than one style of music. It's hard to find a drummer who can play jazz *and* rock 'n' roll. There wasn't a whole lot of freedom on the project, because it was *his* gig, but you learn from those kinds of experiences. You learn to play as consistently as possible—to hit the drum the same way, in the same place, every time, no matter what the lick is. It's almost geometrical: You keep the stick on the same plane. It keeps the time more solid.

Three hit singles came from the first Shaun Cassidy album I did. Since then, I've done Scott Baio and Leif Garrett, all for producer Michael Lloyd. The Shaun Cassidy recording of "Da Doo Run Run" was a big hit. There's a certain tom fill that I put in there which was just a three-beat turnaround. Well, I must have gotten called for a dozen dates after that, just to play that one lick. It's *amazing!*

I also love playing jazz. I wish I could play brushes more; I haven't in so long that it hurts. I may be doing a jazz trio album this year with a friend of mine. Playing with Roger Kellaway was a real pleasure, because he's such a tasty player. I just love to get outside and play those rhythmic turnarounds where I can do fives and sevens—things like that. Roger and Pat Martino can get as outside as anyone I've ever played with, and they can come back right there on 1 every time.

JD: I understand you've also done a considerable amount of studio work in L.A.: recordings, jingles, movies.

RK: Yeah, that's where my early training came in handy. You've really got to read your ass off if you want to play jingles. You get there at 9:00 A.M., they put a chart in front of you, you hear a fast click, and you're off. You'd better be able to play it right the first time.

I found that a good way to practice reading is to get the scores from classical pieces, get a copy of the record, and follow the score as you listen to the recording. Pretty soon, you'll start to recognize every figure and you'll never get figures more complex than those on a date. The rest is just interpretation. As for learning how to play in the studio, there's really no way to teach that. You just have to learn by doing it.

The recording business is all word of mouth. I would never call someone for a date I was producing, unless I knew that person very well. In the same way, the people who called me called on recommendations, or they already knew me. It's basically a small community where everybody knows everybody else. And if you're not cutting it, you won't be around very long. That keeps you on your toes.

Movie work is much more down to business than recording is. It's very cut and dried. I put TV and movies in the same category. You get to have more fun with records. You can decide what tuning you want, which drums to use, what kind of groove you're going to cop, what kind of fills to play—all in accordance with what the producer wants, of course. But in TV and movie work, you've got to play it *exact.* It's a matter of saving time. Also, in

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movies and TV, you're dealing with a lot more than just a basic rhythm section.

As far as money goes, jingles are the only things that pay residuals. I've done TV themes that have played over and over, and you get absolutely nothing. It's terribly unfair. And if you want to talk about videos, well, there's no money there at all! You do them to promote a record, so they usually pay the artist, but they don't have to. Sheena paid us for doing her videos, but there's no law that says she had to pay anything.

JD: Have you ever taught or done clinics?

RK: When I taught, my lessons ran anywhere from half an hour to three hours, depending on how things went. Basically, I tried to teach concept. By that I mean how you feel about doing something. For example, hitting a groove or hitting a pocket and holding it: getting as much out of playing the same thing over and over as you would from playing a lot of different things, playing with *intensity,* and making the same pattern as exciting and intense as you possibly can. I never taught any beginners, only advanced students. Teaching beginners takes a special person. In effect, it involves getting someone interested in the instrument, and if that person is interested, planting that seed.

As far as clinics go, I've been asked to do some, and I'd love to. I think it would be a real challenge, and I think I could put on a good clinic. At one point in my life, I would have loved to have done clinics all the time, but I didn't have the reputation. Now, I *have* the reputation, but I don't have the time. I think I would talk about playing consistently, and playing relaxed but with confidence. Playing drums is just hitting that pocket and holding it. Some people study for years and still don't understand how to do that.

JD: Can you elaborate a bit on your attitudes toward studio playing versus live?

RK: As far as tuning goes, I muffle the drums more live than in the studio. In the studio, I try to keep everything wide open. If a drum is miked properly, you shouldn't have to deaden it at all. You need to play with as much *life* as possible, and then do the controlling on the board. You can take things out—electronically—much more easily than you can put them in.

For live playing, I have to deaden the drums sometimes for the benefit of the sound tech out front, because the drums aren't the only thing coming through those mic's. There's also my monitor, which is right behind me. So I generally have to deaden, especially the 12" and 14" toms. I try to keep the rest wide open.

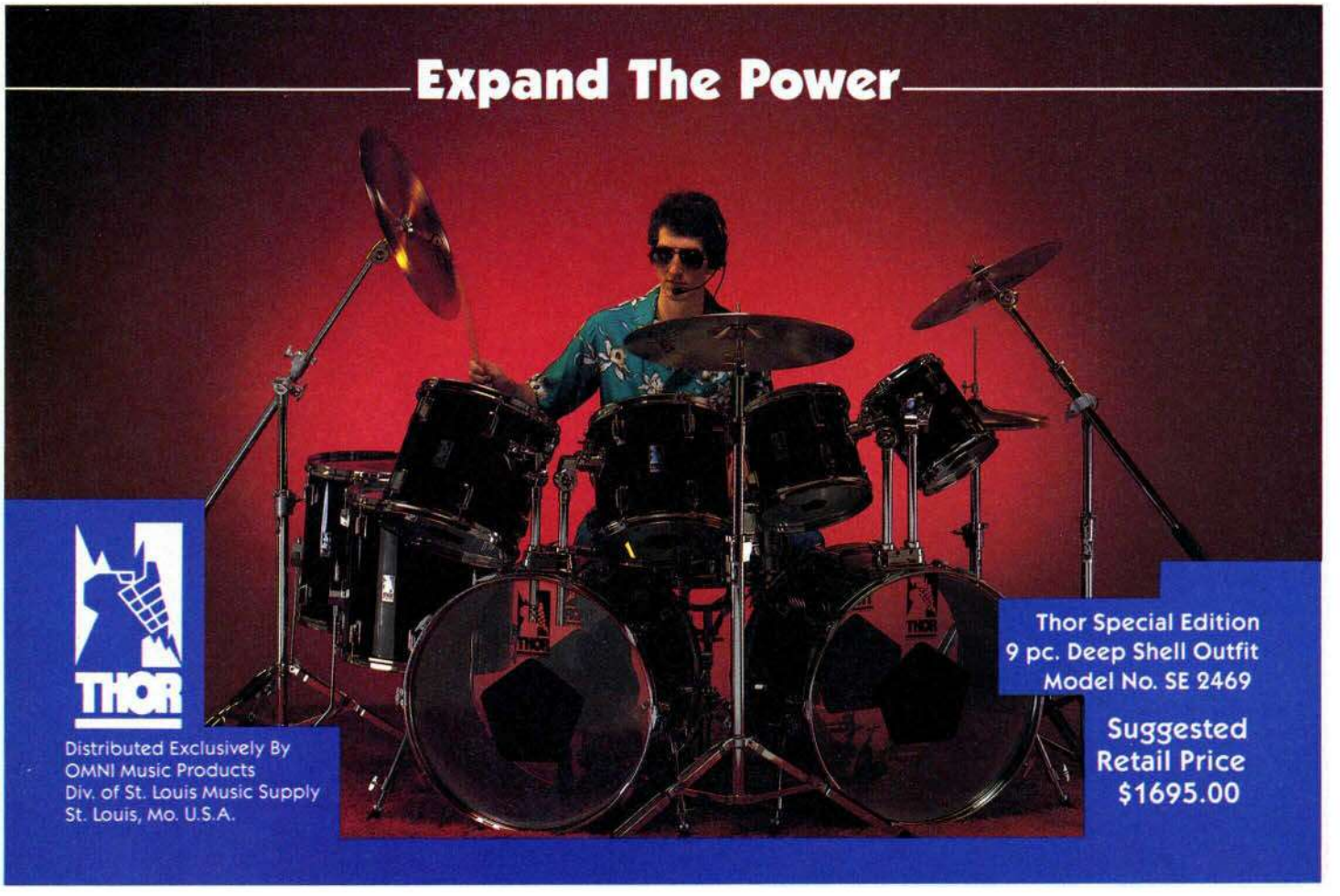
I use Remo *Ambassadors* on the top and *Pinstripes* on the bottom. I've had my snare drum tuned where one side of it was floppy and one side was tight. Usually, I'll tune the batter side a little lower than the bottom. That gives me a good crack without that much of a ping. Basically, I always go for what sounds good to me.

As far as monitors go, I have as little on stage as possible. The more you put into a monitor, the more there is that can go wrong, and the greater the chance that the frequencies will cancel each other out. There are certain sequencer parts on the synthesizer that I need to hear, because that's literally my click. If the guitar is in the monitor at the same time, their frequencies cancel each other out, and I lose the synthesizer. So I have to have certain mixes for certain tunes. But I try to keep even those mixes as bare as possible. I'll have Sheena up front, so I can follow where she goes. I'll have the bass and kick drum good and hot, so I can feel them hitting me in the back, and I'll have rhythm keyboards.

JD: What about your equipment?

RK: Pearl supplies me with what I need, everywhere. I'm using an all-maple kit right now, with deep power toms and the new snare drum with the free-floating shell. That drum's a killer. I had a metal-shell drum that I was going to use, but this drum is so big and has such a kick to it that I didn't need the metal shell. So I use the maple shell to give it a little, more warmth, and it sounds great. I've been using it on dates, and I get nothing but good comments. I've actually had requests to bring that drum.

I'm also using 6", 8", 12", 14", and 16" toms, a 22" bass drum, and four Simmons pads. They were hard to get used to at first. They're the old pads that are real hard, and



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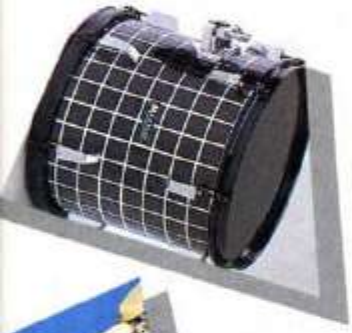

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JD: How did you get your job with Sheena Easton?

RK: Her musical director called me. They were having drummer problems, and they asked me to come by. I sight-read the charts, and I liked it. I like working with Sheena. She's got some chops. She sings really well, and she's very professional. Actually, this is a very professional organization. We have a job to do, and we all depend on each other to get it done. And when it's done right, it's a lot of fun. It's just like a chain. If there's a weak link, the whole chain suffers. It's just basic professionalism. We're there to make good music and to have fun doing it. Some of us are even insured on this tour. The basic rhythm section players are insured in case something really terrible happens. Consequently, on the road, I can't do things like horseback riding, water skiing, or a lot of physical things that I might want to do, because if I couldn't make a show, there'd *be* no show. Sheena would cancel it. She couldn't bring anyone in to play the parts. They wouldn't know what to do. This is a very tight show, and some of us can't really be replaced.

JD: What's life like on the road with Sheena? Are you enjoying it?

RK: It has its good points and its bad. One of the nice things is having the opportunity to play in a lot of different places. One of my favorite places is the Merriweather Post in Columbia, Maryland. It has great sound. It sounds so good that albums have been recorded there. The Nederlander Theatres are really a lot of fun, too. They're the open, outdoor ones like the Garden State Arts Center in New Jersey. We've been doing a lot of 3,000-seaters. For me, those are just perfect. The Opera House in Boston is a beautiful theater.

Of course, they're not all great. Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., had so much echo that it was hard to play. We also played a place somewhere in Taiwan—a really big arena. When you hit a G on any instrument, it would go on for 20 seconds! We timed it. I had a tom that was tuned to G, and when I hit it, it went all the way around the dome. That's the kind of thing that makes it hard.

And sometimes, in different places, we'll finish a soundcheck, and they'll say, "Okay, everybody off the stage." It has to do with the local stagehands' union. Maybe I'll want to go back and change a head, but it's not allowed. They'll fine you very heavily, or they'll fine the artist. It's rather unfair. Sometimes they won't even let you get back to your trap case to get something out. Give me a break! Soundchecks are basically enjoyable, though, because we get a chance to play for a half an hour or so. We just do some old tunes, jam for a while, and get used to the sound of the place. We like doing that a lot, because otherwise, we don't see our instruments all day.

On the negative side, you're in a different city every day, eating strange foods, and encountering some new bacteria. Your sleeping habits are totally destroyed. It's also rough because you miss your kids growing up. Of course, my daughter can go to school and say, "Yeah, my dad's a rock 'n' roll drummer." I mean, how many kids can say that?

It's only *really* tough when we're out for a long time. Then I go bananas. If I'm in a place for more than one day, then I enjoy it. But if it's just in and out, there's really no time to enjoy it; I might as well not even have been there. If you asked me where I was two weeks ago, I probably couldn't tell you. I may have been in five cities that week.

But I basically have fun at what I do. If I didn't, man, I just wouldn't do it. This is too crazy a business not to enjoy doing it. If you *don't* enjoy it, then you should get out of it, because this business can be a real killer, and you've just *got* to get a thrill out of being a part of it.

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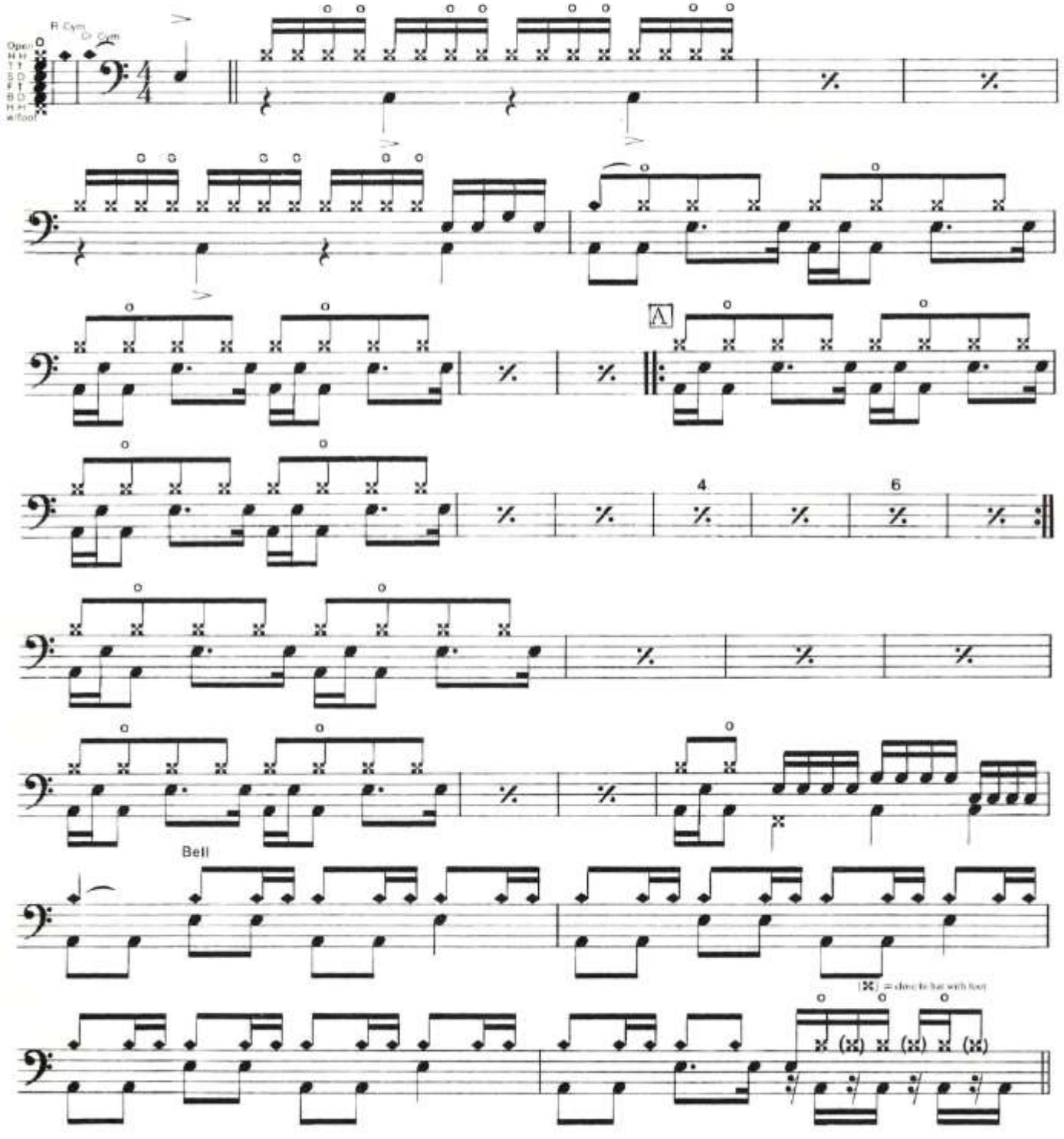
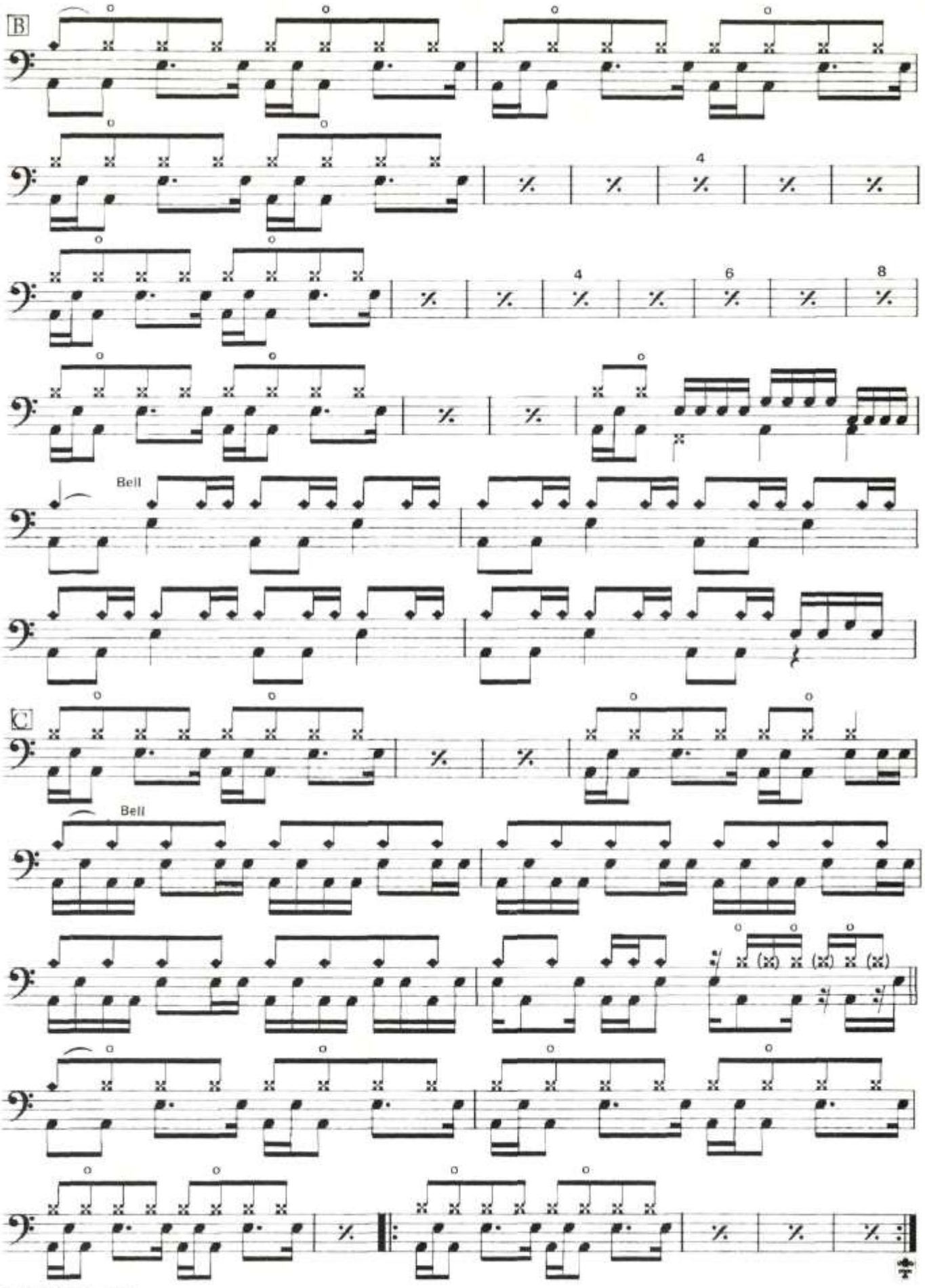
Transcribed by James Morton

Bernard Purdie:" Rock Steady "

This month in *Rock Charts,* we journey back in time to a vintage classic: Aretha Franklin's "Rock Steady"—and if ever a groove was recorded, this is it. Bernard Purdie's tight, flowing, in-the-pocket, patented grooves became such a trademark in Aretha's recordings that a restrospective look certainly is warranted here. Being cognizant of both the benefits and limitations of transcriptions, I strongly recommend that you go out and pick up "Rock Steady" to listen to Bernard's feel and inflections. You can find this cut on two albums: *Young, Gifted And Black* (Atlantic, SD 7213) and *Ten Years Of Gold* (Atlantic, SD 18204). "Rock Steady" was released January 24, 1972.


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by Charlene Washburn

Dealing With Insurance

Think you *can't* afford insurance? Could you afford to replace all your equipment if it was stolen or destroyed? Think about it. You've invested your hard-earned cash in good equipment. Your sound is improved. Your audiences are growing. You're on the way to success. And then a fire destroys the club where you're playing. You're left with ashes. You could be finished—or out of circulation for a long time, and that's something your career definitely doesn't need.

How about a more frequent occurrence? You've set up for a gig and gone back to your hotel until show time. Upon arriving back at the club, you find that your drums have been stolen. Replacing them won't ruin you, but it *will* blow the budget for a while.

While driving to your next engagement, your truck or van is involved in an accident and most of your equipment is damaged or destroyed. Don't think your auto policy will cover the equipment.

Insurance for professional musicians is costly, but it's budgetable—a known expense. It's something you can plan for. Uninsured losses aren't.

Buying Insurance

How do you go about purchasing insurance? Your first step should be to find an agent you can trust, and who is knowledgeable about personal and commercial property/casualty insurance. When you're looking to insure your equipment, you don't need a life or health agent. Ask friends or other musicians to recommend an agent. A professional association such as Professional Insurance Agents (PIA) or Independent Insurance Agents (IIA) may be able to direct you to an agency that can handle your needs. They're listed in the yellow pages. Agents looking for business from musicians may advertise in a local musicians' directory.

An independent agency or brokerage may be your best bet. Such individuals can place business with more than one insurance company, and they may be able to find a better deal for you by comparison shopping than can an agent who is affiliated with only one company. A larger agency or insurance brokerage may have more clout than a smaller one, and may be able to negotiate a more comprehensive package for you at a reasonable price. A company is often willing to accommodate an agent with favorable terms and prices, if that agent brings it a large amount of business.

Agents have to get some information from you before going to the insurance companies for quotes. The more they know about your particular situation, the better job they can do for you. They have to know what to cover and decide on the best way to cover it.

First, let them know whether you're an amateur, semipro, or pro. Amateurs, obviously, are drummers who are not paid for their work. Most companies make the distinction between pros and semipros, and charge accordingly. You're a semipro if you're paid to make music on an irregular basis—an occasional Saturday night at the VFW, or entertainment at conventions, dinners, or weddings. In this instance, your equipment will rarely be left overnight. Professionals include not only the Buddy Rich types, but the drummer who plays with any band regularly. You don't have to make your living from music to be a pro, though you do have to earn a fairly steady income from it.

Have your equipment appraised, and find out how much it would cost to replace it. Take pictures of everything and save receipts. It's a good idea to keep these in a safe-deposit box or in a file cabinet separate from the equipment. Then, if the equipment is destroyed, you'll still have the records intact. It will make the process of adjusting a claim go faster and smoother.

The equipment's current value is its actual cash value (ACV) and allows for depreciation. Most companies will want to insure it on this basis. However, some markets will provide replacement-cost coverage. This will pay you the entire amount, up to policy limits, needed to replace the equipment if something happens to it. This method is more expensive, because a higher rate is charged and because the basis for the premium (the value of your equipment) will be higher. You're paying a premium based on new equipment, not on used.

Decide which valuation method is most important to you. Would you be able to find good used equipment comparable to your own? Are you willing to pay the price for replacement-cost coverage?

If you do purchase replacement-cost coverage, pay attention to the coinsurance clause. The coinsurance percentage is the proportion of the value of the equipment that you must insure the equipment for. It's a tool for underwriters used to discourage underinsuring property. A penalty is imposed if the amount of insurance carried is less than the coinsurance amount. For example, if the coinsurance requirement is 90%, and the value of your equipment is $10,000, you *must* insure your equipment for at least $9,000.

The type of place you play is a factor in determining what type of coverage the company is willing to provide. Security is better at a Holiday Inn than at an inner-city bar. The lounge at a hotel is normally kept locked, and employees are always on duty.

Most underwriters are interested in knowing what type of music the band plays. It's not hard to believe that classical musicians pay a much lower rate than do country & western or rock bands. The type of crowd the band attracts makes the difference. Seldom do fans of Jean-Pierre Rampal destroy the concert hall.

If you're on the road, the exposure is increased. The chance of your equipment being damaged or destroyed in an accident is greater if you travel than if you're in a local band. It's also been noted that theft occurrences are more common when you do not know your audiences. Equipment left overnight in vehicles is also tempting to thieves.

The company will need to know how the equipment is transported. Do you have one truck or more than one vehicle? The likelihood of a total loss is reduced if you have your equipment in several vehicles. Remember the admonition, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket!"

You'll also have to provide your driver's license number and birthdate, so that your driving record can be investigated. If it's poor, the company will probably put a stipulation on their quotation that you not drive the vehicle transporting the equipment.

The deductible chosen affects your premium. A deductible is the minimum amount a company will ask you to retain out of each loss. Most companies require at least a $250 minimum deductible. Their reasoning is that you'll try harder to prevent a loss if you have to pay part of it yourself.

Since deductibles lower premiums, carry as high a deductible as you can afford. Some bands carry large 'deductibles, such as $1,000 or $5,000, and are purchasing

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insurance as catastrophe coverage only—for protection against a *total* loss. They don't buy insurance to cover more frequent smaller losses.

Don't take offense at numerous questions. Neither the agent nor the company is being nosy. Underwriters must make decisions on what to charge based on the probability of loss. Charging too little could possibly cost them their jobs. Charging too much could cost them business.

Answer all questions truthfully and to the best of your knowledge. To do otherwise is grounds for a company to deny claims or cancel your policy. The insurance companies aren't judging your lifestyle. High premiums aren't necessarily due to the music business' *bad reputation,* but because of the high value of property that is easily damaged or stolen.

Initially, obtain quotations from several agents. However, once you purchase the insurance, stick with that agent for a few years before you shop around again. You'll build up experience with the company that could be good for reduced premiums. If your history of losses is clean, ask your agent about rate credits.

The lowest premium may not be the best buy. In this respect, buy your insurance as you would your equipment: Pay attention to quality. All policies aren't identical; all insurance companies aren't alike. Ask your agent's advice on which plan is best suited for you. Ask if the insurance company is financially sound. You won't save money if you have a claim and the insurance company has folded, or if your policy doesn't cover that particular claim but another policy would have covered it.

Types Of Policies

The type of policy you're buying is called"Inland Marine." It's a specific type of property policy designed to cover equipment. Property policies are either "all risk" or "named perils." A named peril policy lists what kinds of losses will be covered. For example, the policy may cover only losses due to fire, vandalism, or wind. An all risk policy covers all losses, except those specifically excluded. The thing to remember with this policy—or any policy—is to read those exclusions. Realize that there are many situations that are *not* covered. Common exclusions are wear and tear, mechanical or electrical breakdown, mysterious disappearance (missing, but no evidence of theft), or damage you intentionally do to the equipment. It may cost an arm and a leg to fix a faulty sound system, but unless it's been accidentally damaged, the insurance company isn't going to pick up the tab.

Know what conditions and warranties are placed on your coverage. Violation of these could invalidate your insurance. Conditions and warranties are actions you must take and obligations you must fulfill to have coverage. A common condition is that the vehicle used to transport your equipment be locked when unattended. If the equipment is stolen from the vehicle, there must be sign of forced entry. If you've left the vehicle unlocked, the insurance company will hold you partially responsible for the theft and won't pay the claim.

Before signing any agreements or waivers, other than your usual contract with the nightclub, consult with your agent. Signing such papers could also void your insurance contract. An example would be a waiver of subrogation. This prevents your insurance company from collecting from the club for damages due to the club's negligence.

Most, but not all, risk policies include transit coverage for loading, unloading, and transporting your equipment. If not, you can purchase a special transit policy.

If you have a personal auto policy and use your vehicle to carry your equipment, there could be a problem. Depending on the company, you could be required to purchase a more expensive business auto policy. Again, this is because your exposure is increased. Concealing this fact could jeopardize your coverage.

Amateurs and some semipros may be able to get equipment coverage under their homeowners' or renters' policies. This is usually done by scheduling the equipment (listing each piece individually) on a "floater." A floater is a mini Inland Marine policy added to your homeowners' policy. Professionals aren't usually able to insure their equipment this way.

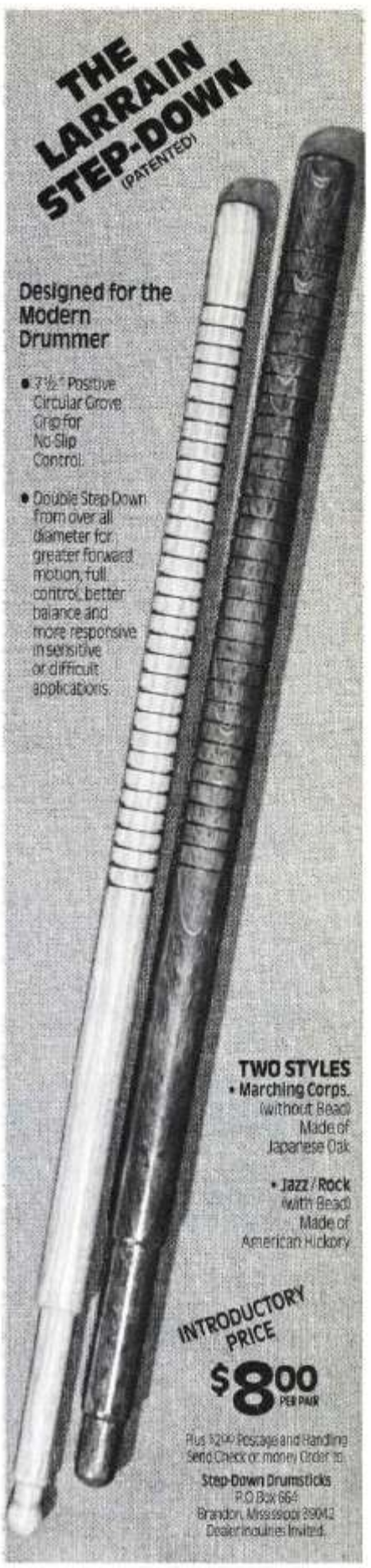
Making Claims

If you have a claim, take steps necessary to protect your equipment from further damage, and call your agent as soon as possible. In cases of theft or vandalism, it's required that you notify the police immediately.

A company adjuster will probably contact you within three days of notification. If not, call your agent. Contact your agent if you have *any* problems. Your agent is the intermediary between you and the company.

Most insurance agents are professional and are as serious about their business as you are about your music. However, if you do have a complaint about an agent, you can contact your state's Attorney General's office, or the agency that regulates and licenses agents, which typically is the Insurance Commissioner's office or the Commerce Department. The same thing is true if you're having trouble with the insurance company. You can also complain to your insurance company about the agent or vice versa.

Keep in mind that insurance policies are contracts. Read them carefully. If you have any questions or have trouble understanding anything, don't hesitate to contact your agent. That's what the agent is there for.



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can do that that well.

SF: Let me ask if something else you said in '78 still holds true. "One of the biggest problems I have is that I want to play music—I love to play music—but I have a great deal of difficulty accepting the environment that it must be played in."

ES: I miss certain aspects of playing, but I don't miss others. I know who I would like to play with, and if I ever have the opportunity, I *will* play. Take for example the trio Creatrix that I'm involved with. Not only from a musical standpoint, but for compatibility of the members, there's no stress involved.

SF: How did Creatrix start?

ES: Wayne Darling was on bass, and I was the resident drummer at a clinic with Joe Henderson as guest clinician. Steve Erquiaga was the guitarist in Joe's group. I'd never met Steve before. He asked if he could play with Wayne and I on one of the faculty concerts. Man, it was just lock-up city—amazing. The rhythmic concepts were just ridiculous. There were times where people actually thought that things were rehearsed. We had trouble not playing the same things. It would sound like people trying to copy each other. It got to the point where we had to tell ourselves, "If one guy starts to do something that you hear at the same time, somebody *don't* do it." It sounded like a bunch of people chasing each other.

Playing with that trio is truly what I'd like to do. Playing with a guitar is really good, for some reason, even more so than a piano. It's looser. You can be more percussive on guitar. Guitarists I've played with, as opposed to pianists I've played with—with the exception of someone like Hal Galper or Jim McNeely—have been more rhythmically adventurous. Erquiaga would always say, "I wish I could get right inside the drums." He has a great fascination with rhythm. He's not overly concerned with harmonic concerns, as so many horn players can be.

Creatrix did some recording in Australia that was supposed to be a record, but it never came off. What amazes me—and I'm trying to say this as though I were not part of the group—is that, whenever the trio has played, the response has always been overwhelming. I mean, people go *bananas!* People are truly moved by the music. Still, no record companies, producers, etc., have been willing to take a gamble with Creatrix. But my musical goal is to, in some way or form, play in that trio setting. As long as the desire is there on all three of our parts, something will transpire. If things keep working out, maybe eventually I'll be able to work the trio into a clinic situation. It's so much nicer than dealing with clubs. I'll tell you one difference. I could see how this could really rile older players, and rightfully so. When you do a clinic, people are coming there to listen, hopefully to learn, and to pick your brain. People are not coming there to bullshit, to make noise, or to be rude. In other words, you're treated with some sort of respect. The more people can take from me, the more I can give to them, and the more I get in return.

Clinics have become a virtual necessity now, simply because jazz has become so spread out. It's not a metropolitan music anymore. There are people interested in jazz/improvised music all over the world. People in a little town in Kansas can't jump on a plane or train and go to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco or whatever. But musicians can come to them.

Now, a good clinic would be a format like the video Horacee and I did, where a person is almost compressing a whole lifetime of experience into one little lesson, saying, "This is what helped *me.* Try it and see if it'll help you," as opposed to a situation where an individual says, "Number one, I can't read music. Number two, I'm self-taught. Number three, I don't know anything about how these things work. I just sit down and play." Great! Don't call it a *clinic.* Sit down and play, but don't call it a clinic! Also, the drummer who gets on stage, takes a solo, and then asks if there are any questions, immediately lets the audience dictate what is going to be said. No offense to young drummers, but, you and I, both having been young drummers at one time, know the average thought process of a 12- or 13-year-old drummer. "What size sticks do you use? How is your right foot so fast?" I don't get those kinds of questions at my clinics very often. 1 don't give the audience a chance to ask them. I ask *them* questions. I reverse the whole thing.

We all come up through the same stylistic changes as the music. Case in point: I've had kids at Aebersold clinics who play four-on-the-floor bass drum, a 2 and 4 backbeat with the left hand, and a non-repetitive ding-dinga-ding ride cymbal. I'll ask, "Who do you listen to?" A kid will say Billy Cobham, Steve Gadd, Louis Bellson, and Max Roach. I'll say, "Do they play the way you just played now?" "No." "Then why do you play the way you play? Do you listen to those drummers, or are you just trying to impress me?" "No, I listen to them." "Then why do you play the way you play?" "I don't know."

It all has to do with the development of the brain and how one learns the steps of coordination. By the end of that week, those kids have gone from their early period, emerging into their bebop period, because they've been taught, they've listened, and they've picked up from others how to coordinate that way. The sad part is that people try to bypass that. They try not to deal with it, learn it, and *then* move on to the next phase. Any good drummer does that anyway. That's part of the progression.

SF: How much has rock music influenced you?

ES: Well, I'm 40 years old. When I grew up, I was a terrible jazz snob. When I was with Woody's band, we did a couple of rock-oriented albums done by Richard Evans on Cadet Records. Morris Jennings was brought in to play percussion. There were a couple of swing tunes and the rest were like funk. On one take after another, Richard Evans just kept saying, "Ed, that isn't the right feel, man. It still sounds like you're playing jazz." It got down to the point—especially on the *Heavy Exposure* album—where Morris had to play drumset on some of the stuff. He didn't even look at the charts, and he just *killed* it! That's when I woke up and realized that there really was something to playing this stuff.

Since then, I've found that, from studying funk and listening to good funk players, it's just as much fun, just as demanding, and can be just as creative playing-wise. It's all in your attitude. There's good funk and there's bad funk, just like there's good and bad jazz. My favorite drummers back then were Dannie Richmond, Roy Haynes, and Max Roach. Of course, if I'd had the opportunity to meet one of those guys and said, "Gee, Mr. Haynes, I hate rock 'n' roll," he probably would've said, "What are you turning your ears off for? *Listen!"* We accuse other people of categorizing us in our playing, but we do a large part of that to ourselves by our attitudes toward music. We gravitate toward that which we're most familiar with and feel most comfortable with. I realized that, for years, my reasons for putting down rock 'n' roll were really because I was totally ignorant of it, and didn't have the guts to try it.

A large part of my practicing now is geared towards funk-type stuff. From a teaching standpoint, let's be realistic. With the way the marketplace is now, kids have

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a better chance of making their livings playing that sort of music, than they do if they go out and try to play like Elvin Jones. Kids who are serious drummers will be able to do it all. That's the beauty of it, and that's what really opened the door for me. One day I said to myself, "What am I, a *jazz specialist?"* 1 had kids who wanted to learn this or that, and I'd steer them someplace else. That's not right. To establish a positive relationship with students you start out doing something they want to do, and then branch off from that in directions where you see they need to go.

Drummers who play like Elvin, Mel Lewis, or Steve Gadd, have studied their instrument, which means one thing: They can use their brains. They can *think,* and they can *concentrate.* Any good player on any instrument—anyone who does anything well —*thinks well.* That is one thing that MTV and many drum ads don't talk about and don't instill. Using your brain is the key to learning the instrument and playing it well. MTV and pictures of drums on fire do nothing for students. They do *plenty* for the merchandisers. But the merchandisers must realize that the only way they are going to maintain a market is by getting people who play the instrument on an ongoing basis, and who pass that information and love on to other kids who want to play. If you learn to *think* about the instrument, then you'll find out immediately whether you want to *play* it. This is a hard instrument to play. You don't just play a big backbeat on 2 and 4, and bash away on the hi-hat all night. There are other aspects to the instrument—just like you don't play ding-dinga-ding and hip licks with your left hand all night. When some students hear that, they go, "Wow! Let's get going." And others don't even have the guts to call you, and tell you that they're not going to study anymore.

With a drumset, you're working with students towards their ability, eventually, to improvise. I mean, 99% of the music played on drumset is improvised. The hardest thing to do with young *or* old students is to get them over the fear of making mistakes. As soon as students realize they can make mistakes, and that if they approach it in the right way, they can turn their mistakes into non-mistakes, then the battle's won right there.

The last time I was in England, I ran into this little 12- or 13-year-old kid named Mark Mandaceer, who comes from one of those ghettos where they stick the West Indian folk. He's so poor that he doesn't even own a drumset. He can't afford a teacher. He knows other kids who are taking lessons, and he cops lesson sheets from them. Man, this kid is just going to tear it up. He and the instrument are the same. He has natural movements behind the instrument, and the most beautiful thing of all is that he has no fear of failure—no fear of making a mistake. When he's playing in this combo, and he tries to pull something off, but he drops about six beats all over the floor, he just turns to me and gives this great big smile, shrugs his shoulders and says, "Next time." The next time comes and he *kills.*

SF: Are there any aspects of your studies that you would tell your five-year-old son Steven are a waste of time, and any aspects that you would tell him are absolutely essential to learn if he decides to become a professional drummer?

ES: No. The only thing I could tell him about would be his attitude, and about how to approach the instrument or whatever he's doing. I would tell him that none of it is drudgery, and that any event with the instrument can, and should, be positive. As soon as that instrument becomes something that you're going to say right, wrong, good or bad with, then, to me, it has lost its validity. That instrument is *neutral.* As a musician, if you take a gig, your job is to play it well. There's nothing worse than going on a gig where you've got a one-arm bass player. If you get angry, first of all, that's the most egotistical thing in the world. If you look hard enough and approach it the right way, you can make music at some level with that person, if you give and take—mostly *give.* It's like Baby Dodds said: Your job is to make everyone in that band feel like playing. It's a very idealistic way of looking at it, but you've got to. That's your outlet.

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by Rick Van Horn

The Benefits Of Survival

The original working title of this column series, way back when, was *Survival On The Club Scene.* The column was originally intended to give helpful hints and advice to make a working drummer's life a little easier while on the job. At that time, "survival" was a bit of editorial exaggeration; there really wasn't much question of *having* a job.

Today, "survival" is a very real and immediate problem. The club scene itself is undergoing tremendous changes, the like of which we have never seen before. Live music is being faced with an array of combined threats, and the outcome is very much in doubt at this moment.

I don't think I need to elaborate too much on the nature of those threats. The influence of mechanically produced music—in combination with the worldwide acceptance of music videos as the medium of choice for personal entertainment—has created two huge problems for the club musician. First, the number of people going out to clubs for musical entertainment has reduced considerably. When you can stay at home and watch name musical acts perform their hits on your wide-screen color TV with the sound pumping out of your $3,000 stereo system, and have your favorite snacks and drinks at a fraction of their cost in a club, why go out at all? Secondly, for those who do decide to go out (in order, perhaps, to get a bit of social contact with old friends or to try to meet some new ones), there's the video disco, where VJs will play those same hits by those same top stars, and you can mingle to your heart's content. To some, the idea of listening to a live local band *copying* the hits doesn't seem to have the same appeal as seeing the original performers do them—albeit as only a video image.

But all is not lost. The public is notoriously fickle and easily bored where entertainment fads are concerned. Take a look at the decline of the video arcade. Part of that decline is due to the fact that much of that form of entertainment has been brought into the home, and of course, that has happened with musical entertainment as well. But there is an interesting phenomenon that is occurring today. While Top-40 and general-appeal live music clubs seem to be reducing in number, attendance at major concerts is up dramatically. People are shelling out large sums of money and standing in lines overnight in order to pick up tickets to top rock and pop act performances. These same artists are often featured on the videos in the discos, so why this intense desire to see them in concert? The answer is readily apparent: because they're *live. Nothing* on a video or audio recording can compare in excitement, intensity, or immediacy to the live performance of music—and the public is beginning to realize that more and more.

What does this mean to the commercial-music club drummer today? It means that you must do what is necessary to *survive* the current nightclub-industry trend towards mechanically presented music and videos, until the musical audience's desire for live, spontaneous, and exciting entertainment works its way back down to the club level again. Clubs are often quick to jump on a bandwagon, but slow to realize that a trend has faded. Thus, while many clubs saw a quick profit in eliminating live bands and converting to the video disco format, they will be reluctant to recognize the fact that the public is already getting overexposed to that form of entertainment. But there's no doubt in my mind that, as people get more and more saturated with MTV and other music video channels in their homes, they are going to want to see something *different* in the way of musical entertainment when they go out. Video discos certainly won't be able to offer that; only live musicians will.

Getting back to the concept of survival, we must realize that this isn't the first time that club players have been faced with a job-threatening musical fad. The original "disco" craze that swept the country in the late '70s and early '80s made many cities virtual wastelands, in terms of live music clubs. Discos sprang up on every street corner, and those bands that *were* able to find work did so by playing music that sounded the same as that coming from the disco turntables—life imitating art. But the fact remains that those bands that were flexible and capable of adapting *did* survive.

Obviously, there's no way that you and your band can imitate a video performance. So what survival options are open to you now? My answer to that question is: plenty! And the nice thing about them is that many of them offer you substantial musical/professional benefits *besides* just keeping you afloat until the video disco fad passes away.

Alternatives

The basic concept of my survival technique is the use of alternative approaches to finding work when the commercial club scene shuts down. Of course, this may not be happening 100% in your area, and you may be able to maintain a booking schedule in some clubs. But if you are faced with gaps in that schedule, or if in fact the situation has become so dour that the "gaps" comprise more total time than the bookings, alternative approaches are called for. The most obvious benefit is that you keep working, and thus your income remains consistent. It may be that you have to scramble a bit and schedule several different types of gigs in different locations, in order to fill the void left by the demise of a steady club gig, but that can be done.

The first approach is the old Douglas MacArthur strategy: "Hit 'em where they ain't." In our case, this means seeking work in clubs specializing in musical styles not heavily covered by videos, and that therefore run less risk of becoming video discos. I mentioned that some of the alternatives I'm going to suggest have accompanying benefits. So to keep things simple, I'm going to list the alternative job possibility, and give the benefits as they apply.

1. *Original music—heavy metal—hardcore/punk clubs.* I lump these together only because they are similar in nature where employment is concerned. Each of these three types of clubs is prevalent in most major cities, and although they may not pay a great deal, they may serve to tide you over, or at least supplement the income from other musical activities. The benefits here include an opportunity to perform music in your band's own area of interest, and perhaps catch the eye and ear of an independent label, or even an A&R person from a major. The metal clubs of L.A. have become famous as the stepping-off place for a lot of hot groups that were basically club bands on the L.A. metal circuit. Hardcore/punk music is getting more and more press and underground airplay; there may be a serious potential for commercial success in that area.

2. *Country & Western clubs.* There are some C&W videos and a few discos, but by and large this is still the realm of live bands. There may not be a lot of exciting drumming called for, but benefits to be gained include a great chance to work on time, simplicity, and feel, along with an opportunity to develop vocal skills, since most country groups are small in number and require as many vocalists as possible for harmony work.

3. *Ethnic music.* You may or may not find clubs that specialize in ethnic music in your area, but in most metropolitan areas, there is work to be found at dances, par-

ties, weddings, etc., with an ethnic base. And again, there are musical benefits to be gained. A short list of possibilities would include: polka music (lots of enthusiasm, fast playing, and busy drumming—improves your endurance and your sticking chops); Latin music (high energy, different grooves and feels—a wide range of drum sounds and percussion applications); Greek music (much of Greek music is based in odd time signatures—good opportunity to develop a natural feel for Polyrhythms); and Carribean (a good chance to gain experience in reggae and/or calypso rhythms). In the cases of Latin and Carribean music, some major cities have sizable Latin and West Indian communities, so all-Latin or all-Carribean music clubs abound. You may find yourself in competition with local musicians from those communities, but it might be worth the effort to "break-in" to gain authentic experience in those feels.

4. *Oldies clubs.* In this case, you can take "clubs" two different ways. There are nightclubs that specialize in music of a particular era—notably '50s/'60s clubs. Between the popularity of *Grease* a few years back and *The Big Chill* more recently, you can really work steadily playing music that dates from the Bill Haley/Chuck Berry era up through Motown and early psychedelia. On the other hand, "clubs" might really mean membership organizations, and these generally are the "dance clubs" that cater to ballroom dancers who enjoy music of the '30s and '40s.

The '50s/'60s clubs offer you the opportunity to develop a concept of period style. The drumming wasn't too involved, but it had an unmistakable *character,* without which the tunes of Elvis, Buddy Holly, or Bo Diddley would not have had their unique sound or their influence on later rock. And the Motown grooves established by Benny Benjamin and other drummers up to and including Bernard Purdie with Aretha Franklin stand today as examples of solid timekeeping combined with innovation and taste.

The ballroom dance clubs can provide you with a chance to develop an authentic swing feel, along with the ability to swing a band and move dancers in something besides a straight disco/rock 4/4 tempo. This type of gig might also be an opportunity to play with a big band, as well as to improve your reading skills.

5. *Pit work.* This gets us away from the traditional "nightclub" type of work, but if you are a good reader, you may be able to augment your steady club work with pit work in regional or community theaters. This type of work generally involves a few rehearsals and then the run of the show, which may vary from two to six nights a week, for anywhere from one to several weeks. If you have additional percussion skills, you may be able to find employment for them here.

6. *Studio work.* If you have any sort of studio activity in your area, you might be able to pick up some demo or jingle work. I'm not suggesting that you'll be able to step into a major album project or pick up national commercials overnight. Keep your expectations reasonable, and realize that you're looking for small-scale projects to fill in the gaps between your steady club work. A lot of smaller studios can't offer much in the way of money, but if you can pick up enough projects, you might earn studio time or other non-denominational forms of payment. You'll also get some invaluable studio experience along the way.

7. *Casuals/"club dates."* I put "club dates" in quotes because of a difference in regional terminology that may cause confusion. In the West, where I spent most of my career, a one-night job at a dance, wedding or party was called a "casual." Since moving to New Jersey, I've discovered that, in the East, such jobs are called "club dates." At any rate, it is into this area that a lot of displaced Top-40 club bands are moving. Where this field used to be the province of semiretired older players or semipro younger ones, the closing down of nightclubs has now put many top pro bands into this field. The Top-40 bands simply exchanged their club wear for tuxes, scaled down the equipment somewhat to make it more portable, added a few old standards and Broadway tunes to their club repertoire, and started working weddings. Many have found that the field is a highly lucrative one—in some cases, more so than the steady club field. Aside from the hassle of carting the equipment around for each gig, the hours are usually better, the pressure less, and the money—on a per-gig basis—much greater. There is the uncertainty of bookings, but a connection with an active catering facility or "club date agent" can often provide a fairly regular schedule.

I don't mean to suggest that every club band that is worried about losing work to video or audio discos should abandon ship completely and seek full-time employment in any of the alternative areas I've listed. I do suggest that you examine the list—as well as any other alternatives that might exist for you specifically—and consider what areas you might be able to fall back on if times get hard. I've seen too many talented bands fall apart because they couldn't survive a period of unemployment. My point is, you don't *have* to be unemployed simply because there isn't work in your "chosen field." If you can be flexible, and if you have musical ability, you can find work—either full-time or supplemental—in other fields for as long as it takes. And between the income and the musical benefits you might gain, who knows? You might just enjoy the variety!

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Chart Reading: Part 1

by Gil Graham

The drummer has many responsibilities when reading a chart. They become especially evident in a sight-reading situation. This article deals with some basic skills necessary for the beginning drum-chart reader. 1 shall touch upon some theory behind the drummer's function, the basics of a drum chart, practice aids, and the importance of being adequately prepared.

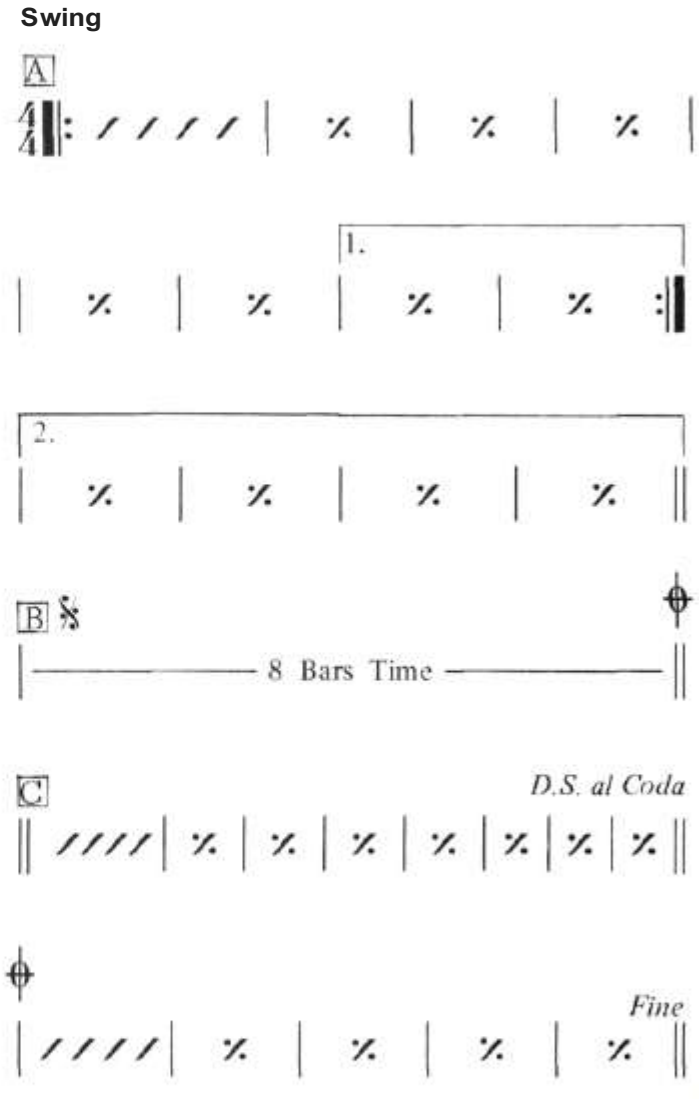
The drummer's main function, especially in a sight-reading situation, is to play accurate time. Solid time is the largest single factor that holds the band together, and it should never be allowed to falter for any reason. The groove is also extremely important, and should always be played in an interesting and creative fashion in order to enhance the overall sound of the band. However, you must never become so preoccupied with the groove that you allow your concentration to be diverted away from the time or the chart. Don't hesitate to simplify your playing if it becomes necessary. Playing more simply is an excellent way to maintain your concentration, because it allows you to focus more directly on the time and the groove, as well as the figures.

Regardless of the type of groove being played (swing, Latin, funk, etc.), simplicity should remain the rule of thumb when sight-reading a drum chart. The chart itself can have fills and figures to play, repeats and tempo changes to make, and cutoffs and holds to catch. You should work toward complete control of all of these aspects. However, in order of importance, you should be most concerned with: (1) time, (2) tempo changes, cutoffs, and holds, and (3) figures. It is time that will always remain the drummer's most important function. Tempo changes, cutoffs, and holds are all related to the time, and are consequently more important than the figures. A misread or omitted figure will never be as disastrous as a mistake in the time.

Often what is not played on a chart can be more important than what is played. Some charts are so cluttered with figures that playing everything would sound too busy. Any chart might be taken at such a fast tempo that playing the figure clearly becomes risky and sometimes impossible. When sight-reading even at a moderate tempo, attempting a particularly difficult figure might jeopardize the time and flow of the music. Another good rule of thumb is: When in doubt, leave it out. It is far better to omit a figure than to lose the time!

A drum chart may be defined both as a rhythmic skeleton outlining the basic form of the music and/or as a road map guiding the drummer through the music. It can range from very busy and cluttered with figures to very empty with only the time indicated. Nevertheless, a large degree of freedom is afforded the drummer in creating the time feel, playing fills, and interpreting the figures. The way you express these things in your playing constitutes your own individuality and the feel you bring to the music. It is vital for you to develop your own style, and equally important to bring that style and musicianship into a reading situation. Music is an art form and must be approached with the appropriate taste, sensitivity, and creativity.

The drum chart that follows shows some features you will commonly encounter on a typical drum chart. No figures have been included in this example. We will examine figures in a variety of contexts and in much more detail in future articles.



The word "swing" at the top of the chart indicates the specific groove to be played. The alphabet letters enclosed in the boxes above the staff are rehearsal letters that function as points of reference. The first measure has time slashes, which indicate that time should be played. The following measures contain repeat signs that tell you to repeat whatever is in the previous measure. In this case, you play time for five more measures, and then play the first ending, which is two bars long. The repeat signs tell you to repeat what falls between them, to start at rehearsal letter A, and play the second ending. Section B tells you to play eight more bars of time. Section C tells you to play eight more bars of time. *D.S. Al Coda* tells you to go back to the sign at letter B, play to the coda sign

eight bars later, and then play the coda at the bottom of the page and stop (Fine).

Understanding the road signs on a basic drum chart is only one of the skills needed for good reading. Proper preparation is also necessary in three other primary areas: chops, grooves, and concentration. You should have the technique to play extremely fast tempi, as well as the control to play extremely slow ones. You should know your basic grooves and as many variations as possible. Being properly prepared in these areas will make it possible for you to give your full concentration to playing the chart as musically as possible.

Getting a good foundation on your instrument requires daily workouts on a practice pad or snare drum. Strength and good hand control are vital to a drummer's development. There are many exercises and books to help develop this strength and control. The 26 rudiments are superb conditioners. Two books by George Stone, *Stick Control* and *Accents And Rebounds,* are excellent collections of exercises. Remember that without strength and control it is impossible to play good time. Your hands must react instantly to the impulses you send them.

Independence on the drumset is another essential skill. Sooner or later, you will run into a chart that has a difficult figure, an extremely fast tempo, or a complicated groove to play. You must be prepared so that, instead of fighting your instrument, you will be able to control it!

The market is flooded with excellent books that can help develop your four-way coordination. *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer* by Ted Reed is a marvelous book that can be employed in many useful and challenging ways. Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer* is an independence bible. *Four- Way Coordination* by Marvin Dahlgren and Elliot Fine will challenge even the most advanced of players.

Knowledge of your basic grooves is mandatory. "Swing," "rock," and "Latin" are very general headings that can have many different variations. For example, a swing feel will always be based on triplets; however, it can be played with sticks or brushes. Some swing tunes might require a relatively busy groove involving the entire drumset, while others demand only time on the cymbal along with the hi-hat. A swing feel can also be done in various time signatures (3/4,4/4,5/4, etc.) and can range from very fast to very slow.

"Rock" or "funk" are familiar terms that are often used interchangeably on a drum chart. Each term means to play a straight 8th-note groove; however, funk is usually much more syncopated. This syncopation is derived by either stating or implying 16th notes. The use of different snare drum and bass drum combinations, as well as cymbal and hi-hat ostinatos, can produce countless variations.

The term "Latin" is a general heading that includes such specific rhythms as samba, mambo, bossa, rumba, etc. Each one of these rhythms has many variations, and you should try to incorporate as many of them as possible into your vocabulary of Latin rhythms. Remember that, in the process of learning to play many variations, you also strengthen the basic rhythm you learned in the first place.

The points I've discussed in this article (responsibilities, road signs, grooves) represent only a small part of the knowledge necessary to be adequately prepared when sight-reading a drum chart. Just as you need to practice consistently to keep your chops in shape, you also need to listen consistently to keep your ears in shape. When you hear something new (groove, kick, fill, etc.), study it until you have mastered it.

In my next article, we will look at another chart and how to prepare yourself adequately for the challenges of sight-reading. I will discuss the importance of concentration and include some tips on counting.

Gil Graham has been on the faculty of Berklee College of Music for eight years. He is actively involved in the percussion department's lab program, where he prepares students for ensembles by strengthening their time feel and sight-reading skills. This article is taken from his book Beginning Drum Chart Reading *written specifically for those labs.*

ON TAPE

THE DRUM SET:
A MUSICAL APPROACH
Yamaha Musical Products
3050 Breton Road S.E.
P.O. Box 7271
Grand Rapids, MI 49510
Time: 2 hours
Price: $89.95 (VHS/Beta)

It's very important to understand what this video is and what it is not. Used correctly, this tape can be a very valuable educational aid, but if used incorrectly, one might not get very much out of it.

Basically, *The Drum Set: A Musical Approach* provides an overview of subjects that any serious drumset player should be aware of. The key word here, however, is "overview." Simply watching this tape will not give a student a thorough knowledge of the many subjects discussed here, and so it is imperative that this tape be used only as a first step. For that reason, this video is better suited for teachers to use with their students, than for students to use as an aid in self-teaching.

The tape is divided into five sections. Segment One focuses on the actual setup of the drums. Ed Soph explains basic concepts concerning reach, holding of sticks, the relationship between the stroke and the sound, and the way in which the fingers, wrists, and arms work together. The second segment deals with hand and foot coordination. Soph begins with explanations of the bass drum and hi-hat pedals, and the different techniques that can be used. He then gives some basic exercises for developing coordination between the hands and feet. Part Three gives a brief historical perspective of the drumset, from ragtime to funk. Soph, along with Horacee Arnold, gives a brief description of the primary styles, along with musical examples. Segment Four discusses playing in a rhythm section from both a jazz point of view and a rock/funk point of view. The final section discusses fills and solos. There is also a small booklet included with the tape that gives additional exercises and reference sources.

It would have been impossible to cover that much material in-depth on a two-hour video, so the people who made this tape didn't even try. There were times when I wished that they could have gone into a *little* more depth, or used the rhythm section on a few more examples, in order to provide a more realistic context. However, that does not detract from the primary values of this video: First, it provides a basic outline of subject matter that a drumset player should be aware of and that a teacher should be incorporating into any serious study of the instrument. Second, for this video to have its maximum benefit, the student is required to do some homework, be it experimenting with the concepts, researching the history through records, or developing the basic exercises that are given. One does not become a great drummer by watching a video, but by getting involved and learning to find one's own solutions to the challenges of the instrument. In that respect, this tape doesn't give you the answers as much as it helps you ask the right questions. — *Rick Mattingly*

STEVE GADD II: IN SESSION
DCI Music Video
541 Avenue Of The Americas
New York, NY 10011
Time: 60 minutes
Price: $64.95/plus $4.00 shipping

As stated in the title, this exceptional video production (DCI's long-awaited follow-up to *Steve Gadd: Up Close)* has Steve in a recording studio setting. This is an effective format for demonstrating Gadd's ability to perform in every imaginable musical genre.

In the initial portion of the program, we have Steve with ace keyboardist Richard Tee and bassist Will Lee, as the three run through some fine R&B, funk, reggae, and shuffle grooves. Midway through, the trio changes to Steve, Jorge Dalto on piano, and bassist Eddie Gomez, as the music heads into some medium-groove jazz tunes, straight-ahead uptempo bop, and a nice selection of authentic Latin feels.

In Session is outstanding in many respects, namely, the superb musicians on the project, the revealing camera work and solid editing, the sheer diversity of musical styles offered, and of course, the consistently dynamic performances by Steve through it all. Even the brief talk segments that take place in the control room, where Steve discusses his approach to the instrument and the music with DCI's Rob Wallis, offer a nice balance between some intense musical performances.

There are so many splendid musical moments here that it's difficult to highlight all of them, though mention must be made of a driving, slow funk groove performed by Steve and Will Lee alone, and Steve's solo work that thunders above some spirited samba and montuna comps supplied by Dalto and Gomez. There's also one of the most sensitive displays of brushwork you'll ever see, beautifully demonstrated in the control room on a cardboard box, while Steve gently hums the melodies to "My Romance" and "Bye Bye Blackbird." You're not likely to hear a cardboard box sound *that* good anywhere else.

The most notable point this tape makes is that Steve Gadd is more than a superb player. He is a truly gifted musician, capable of adapting to any musical environment with skill, intelligence, and a thoroughly musical approach. Gadd lets us see and hear what playing the instrument is really all about on this video, and for that alone, this is one program that should be viewed by anyone who's ever thought about sitting behind a set of drums. Congratulations to the folks at DCI for bringing us one of the most inspiring videos on the market today. — *Mark Hurley*

GROOVING IN STYLES/FILLING IN THE HOLES
by Rod Morgenstein
Bamo
P.O. Box 8662
Atlanta, GA 30306
Price: $23.95 (two one-hour cassettes and book)

In the past few years, a few books have come out that have accompanying cassette tapes with them. But the main focus is always on the book, and the tape merely illustrates what the book is trying to teach. But Rod Morgenstein has taken the opposite approach. He has created a six-hour audio cassette course to teach drummers through their ears instead of their eyes (although there is a book included that illustrates the patterns heard on the tape).

The six-hour course is divided into three, two-hour sections, of which *Grooving In Styles/Filling In The Holes* is the first. (Each section is sold individually, or the entire course can be purchased together.) *Grooving In Styles* makes up the first hour, and consists of 24 grooves in a variety of contemporary styles. Morgenstein's basic procedure is to play the pattern four times at a realistic tempo, then to talk about the beat, pointing out the key elements, and finally to play the pattern again at a much slower tempo. Each pattern is written out in the accompanying book. The second hour, *Filling In The Holes,* follows a similar format. This "chapter" is broken into two parts: filling in using "ghost" notes, and filling in using hi-hat. Again, Rod demonstrates each pattern, talks about it, and then plays it slowly. Throughout, Morgenstein draws parallels between various patterns, and thereby takes the mystery out of grooves that sound more complex than they really are.

The benefits of learning through a cassette are significant. Throughout these tapes, the emphasis is on feel and groove, and the tape demonstrates that in a way a book never can. Also, learning through the ears is very important for any musician. I would suggest that even those who can read well do not refer to the book, but rather learn these patterns by listening to them. (And for those who *can't* read, use

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the book to see what these patterns look like on paper.) Rod Morgenstein has made an important contribution to drum education, and his idea will, no doubt, be imitated. But I question how many people will be able to convey the sense of excitement that Rod injects into everything he plays, and the level of musicianship that he brings to these tapes. There is not a boring, mechanical pattern to be found here; everything feels great. — *Richard Egart*

ODD TIME
by Rod Morgenstein
Bamo
P.O.Box 8662
Atlanta, GA 30306
Price: $23.95 (two one-hour cassettes and book)

Odd meters seem to worry many instrumentalists; just like anything else, once you have a basic understanding of them, odd meters can be exciting and beneficial to your playing. Morgenstein successfully uses both cassette and book to explain odd meters in a very thorough manner. He does this by relating odd meters to more common time signatures. The first tape compares 7/8 to 4/4, and uses many types of exercises that ease the listener into odd time. The patterns gradually become more complex, and Rod demonstrates many ways to learn to "feel" as well as count the odd meter. In addition, Rod demonstrates soloing over the odd bars. Examples of more recent pop tunes using odd meters are given, which Rod plays along to and explains.

The second tape moves into different odd meters, including 5/4, 7/4, 7/8, 9/8, 11/8, 13/8, 15/8, and many others (even 25/16!). Once Rod explains how he disseminates each bar, the most complex meter becomes approachable. Another topic discussed is that of changing time signatures. Rod finishes his discussion with odd-note groupings in 4/4.

With *Odd Time,* Rod Morgenstein does a good job explaining odd meters. If you have an interest in them, check it out. — *William F. Miller*

DOUBLE BASS DRUMMING
by Rod Morgenstein
Bamo
P.O. Box 8662
Atlanta, GA 30306
Price: $23.95 (two one-hour cassettes and book)

Double Bass Drumming is the third in Rod Morgenstein's series on drumset. Included with the two one-hour cassettes is a 23-page book that shows some of the ideas he discusses on the tapes. Rod takes the printed ideas a few steps further by demonstrating different ways to approach the written exercises. All of the ideas, whether printed or on tape, are clearly developed and presented in an understandable way.

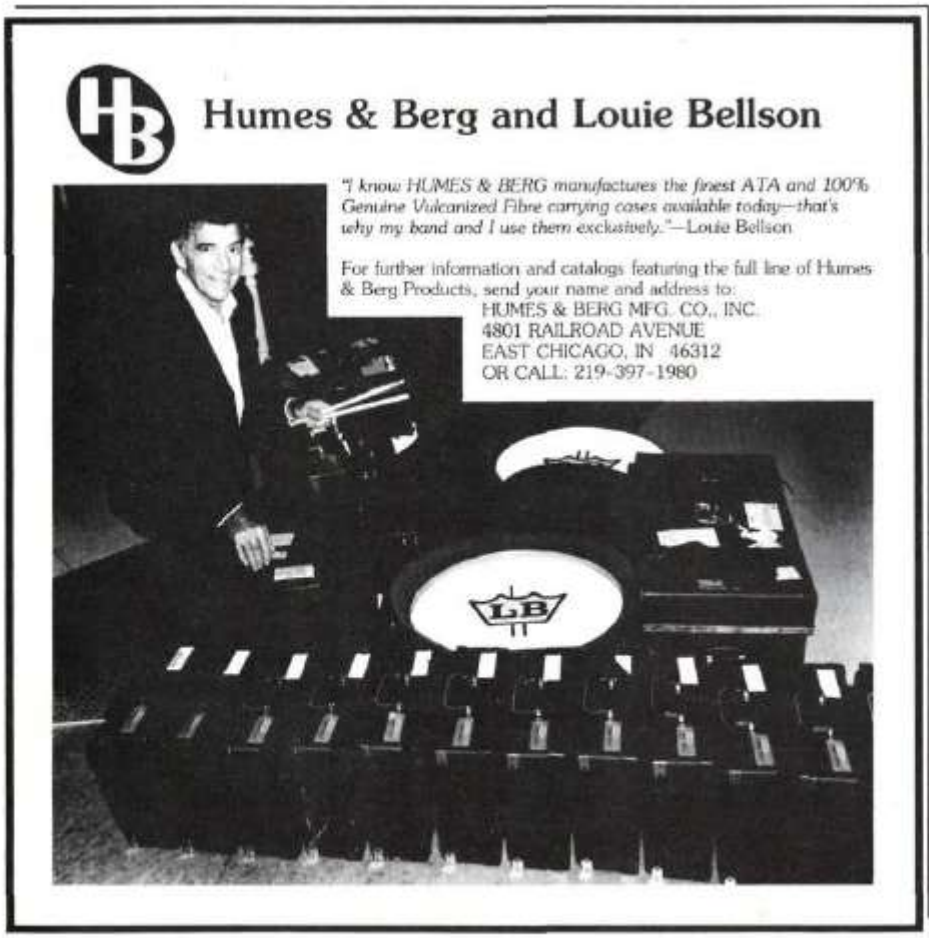
The first topic discussed is playing various time patterns using continuous 16th notes played on double bass. Rod performs each exercise and gives tips on how to develop them. From here, Rod discusses using two bass drums in 16th-note fills. Once again, he plays the exercises both slow and fast, and gives pointers on how to develop them. Most of the exercises are written in 4/4 or 6/8, and along with demonstrating these meters, Rod adapts many of these examples in odd meters as well. This is very helpful in getting the exercises together, as well as learning to play in odd time signatures.

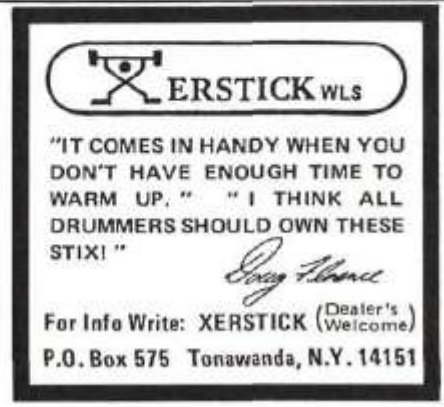
After a thorough discussion on playing 16th-note fill combinations, Rod switches to time patterns in 8th-note triplet feels, including the double-bass shuffle. Then, fills using 8th-note triplet combinations on double bass are discussed. The book finishes with more advanced ideas for time feels and fills.

The book corresponds with about three of the four sides on the tapes. The final side contains some of Rod's personal favorite double-bass licks. It also has a general overview of many of the topics previously discussed, Rod stringing each idea together into one long exercise. Playing along with this lengthy workout will help get your feet together.

A major point that so many instructional materials neglect is that of playing musically, using dynamics and accents. On *Double Bass Drumming,* Rod stresses using the two bass drums musically, and he makes suggestions on how to do so. Double bass drumming techniques are being used more and more, and Rod's ideas on the subject will help anyone improve musically on the instrument, as well as technically. — *William F. Miller*

TAPE 1: SPEED AND HAND CONTROL
TAPE 2: SYNCOPATION AND STICK CONTROL
M & K Productions
601 Bunker Hill Road
Harleysville, PA 19438
Time: Tape 1, 60 minutes. Tape 2,60 minutes.
Price: $29.95 each, $49.95 for both, plus $3.50 for postage and handling. (VHS/Beta)





M & K Productions is currently in the process of completing an entire line of video cassettes that focus on different areas of drumming and percussion. The first two completed tapes, *Speed And Hand Control* and *Syncopation And Stick Control,* display a very straight-ahead approach to education and video. Each tape has a corresponding book, which is available for an additional $7.50 each.

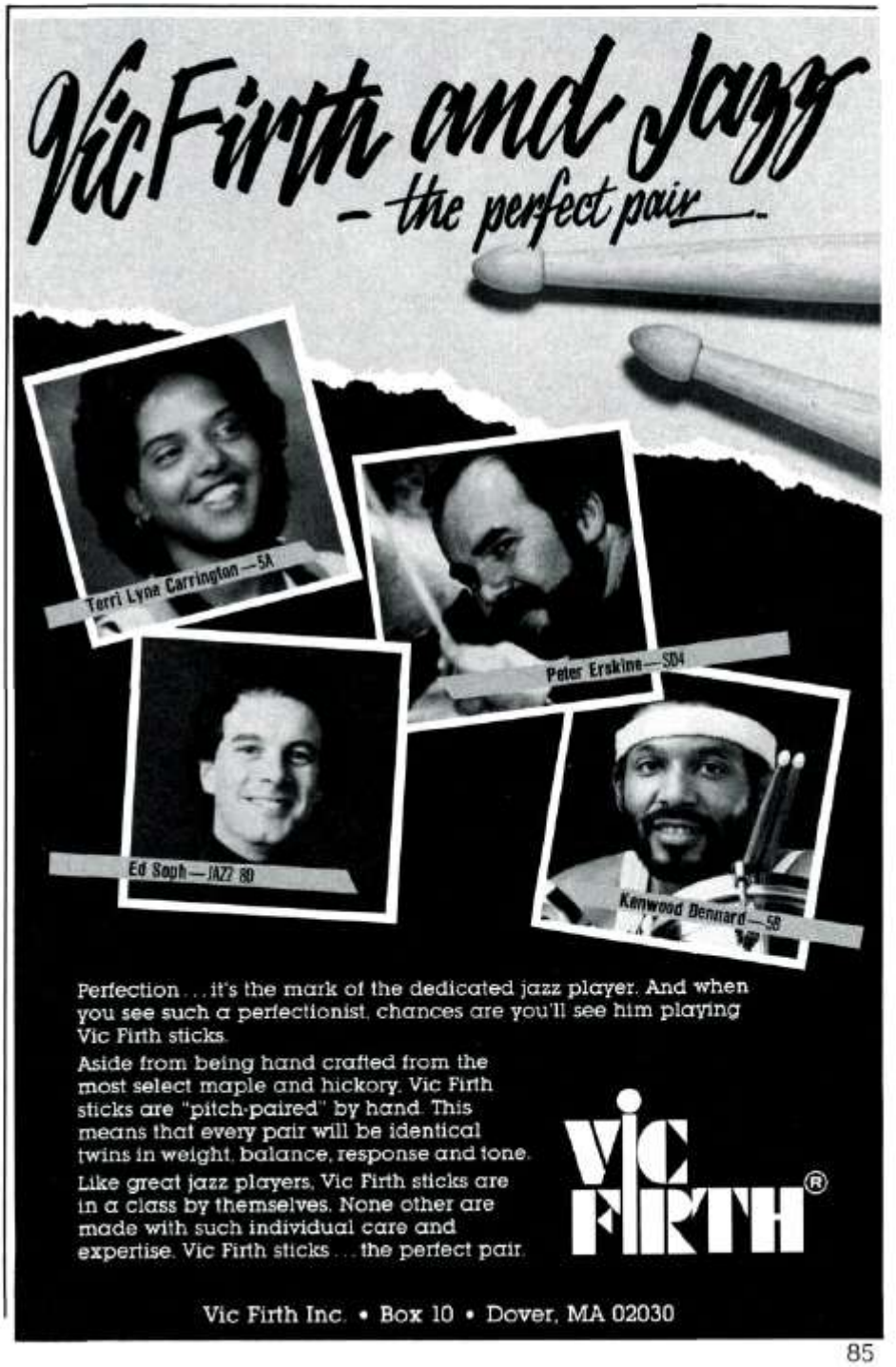
Tape 1, *Speed And Hand Control,* contains exercises for developing the hands. Both traditional and matched grip are discussed, and in both cases, the use and development of the fingers, as well as the wrists, are analyzed. The material is presented in a slow, methodical way—very good for beginners and intermediate-level students. All exercises are performed on a practice pad, and the camera angles are clear in showing exactly what is being demonstrated. The content of the tape includes exercises to develop single- and double-stroke rolls, as well as hand and finger techniques to increase endurance.

Tape 2, *Syncopation And Stick Control,* briefly discusses many topics for the drumset. Many of these exercises are related to Ted Reed's book, "Progressive Steps To Syncopation." The one main focus throughout this video is the development of independence on the drumset. The tape begins with independence exercises in a swing feel. A brief discussion of soloing within the context of a song form is demonstrated. The tape then switches to a limited review of Latin playing on the set, with the samba being the only Latin feel demonstrated. From Latin, the tape discusses rock feels, and briefly discusses double-bass drumming. Finally, drum soloing is demonstrated, applying paradiddle combinations around the drums. This tape is recommended for beginners to intermediate-level drum students interested in a general overview of drumset ideas. — *William F. Miller*

DOM FAMULARO: IT'S YOUR MOVE
Axis Video
P.O. Box 21322
Baltimore, MD 21208
(Distributed to retail stores by Casino Percussion Products, Box 372, Plainview, NY **11803)**
Time: 60 minutes
Price: $57.00 **(VHS/Beta)**

Dom Famularo has come to the attention of the drumming community through his work as a clinician for the Tama Drum Company. On *It's Your Move,* Dom demonstrates many of the concepts for which he has become known. This tape is produced by Axis Video, an organization that is getting a good reputation for putting out high-quality videos: This one is no exception. The camera angles and sound quality are first-rate. Included with this well-done tape is an exercise booklet that follows along with the lessons Dom performs on the video. This booklet is a nice extra, and it does help in understanding the concepts discussed.

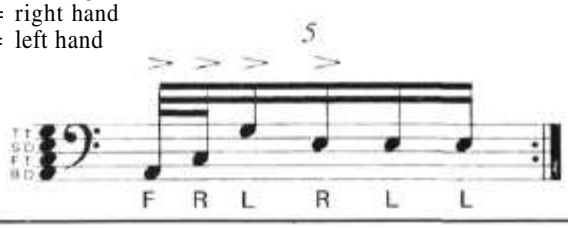
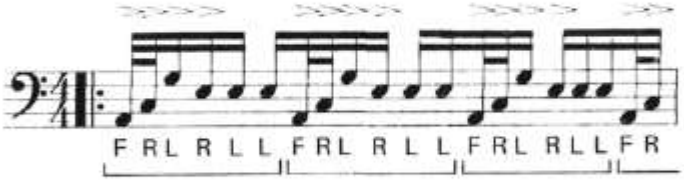
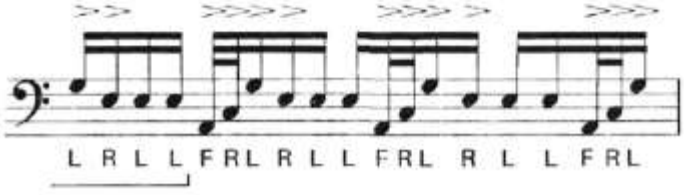
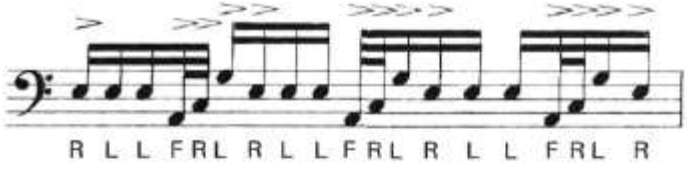
The first concept demonstrated by Dom has to do with coordination and concentration at the drumset. He develops this concept with exercises that use unison rhythmic figures played by different combinations of limbs. The next concept discussed is developing accurate time with the use of a metronome. Dom demonstrates this on a practice pad, and has several interesting reading exercises using 16th notes and triplets. From there, Dom talks about what he labels "Drumistic Form," which he demonstrates on the drumset. He also demonstrates playing ruffs, flams, and other rudiments with both his hands and feet (on double bass drums). The last topic discussed is that of drumset duets. Dom has written a book on the subject, and on this tape, he briefly demonstrates some of his duets. Dom uses the visual medium of video creatively here. On the screen, two images of Dom on his drumset face one another, and he appears to be accompanying himself through the duets. It's a nice effect. The underlying theme of *It's Your Move* is to take the concepts presented and develop them further, going beyond merely copying Dom's "licks." This video does indeed succeed in its intentions. — *William F. Miller*



by David Garibaldi

Quintuplet Exercise

, The following drumset study is based on the quintuplet at the top of the exercise. Taking the quintuplet and playing it as consecutive 16ths in 4/4 time makes a pattern that is five bars long. It will take five full bars for the quintuplet sticking to cycle back to bar 1, beat 1. Generally, a quintuplet such as this would be played over one beat, but by playing it in the manner I have suggested, you should be able to come up with some interesting solo/fill ideas. The exercise can be performed as a five-bar phrase or by each individual bar. When working on each individual bar, play three bars of time, then one of the written bars.

F = foot, right or left
R = right hand
L = left hand

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MODERN DRUMMER MAGAZINE

Inside Paiste continued from page 22

ber of people all over the world who are called the Paiste percussion specialists. They pass on ideas from musicians from the different musical streams, either to Drummer Service or directly to Sound Development.

"When talking to our distributors, we tell them that, as a manufacturer, we know our product and what the musician wants. We have the feedback, the percussionist specialists, and Drummer Service, so we know. We know how to talk to them to find out what they want, and we have good relationships. No matter what kind of selling systems dealers might have—and selling systems are different in different countries—we make sure that they believe us by proving it to them. We tell them to forget their sales system and start understanding the needs of the drummer, and to alter their sales system wherever necessary to fulfill those needs. Distributors must understand that dealers are the important link, but they cannot be the percussion specialists, who talk to the musicians. They are the marketplace. It is our responsibility to pass on to the dealers what we have learned from the drummers, so when the drummers go into the stores, they can get whatever they need. If they are advanced, they need a selection to choose from. If they are not very advanced, they need expertise—information about finding the right thing and not overspending."

When new people come into the organization, it is also one of Toomas' responsibilities to work with them personally. "For example, there is a new marketing director in the American operation. I want to spend two weeks with him, person to person, without a special scheme, in Switzerland and in Germany, to make sure he knows where we're coming from. After those two weeks in Switzerland, I will probably travel with him and come back half a year later to find out how it has developed. It has to become a part of him. It's not like mathematics where there is a formula. There has to be an ongoing understanding and an ongoing open mind to musicians' needs. That, of course, requires people who have feeling, not just administrators. The marketing director will later pass on to all the other people in the organization what he knows, and he has to be open to feedback. For me, that means traveling a lot, and seeing people again and again."

It is Robert Paiste who creates that which is being given to the distributors, dealers, and eventually the drummers. "This happened in a very natural way," Robert says, echoing his younger brother. "Father was making cymbals and I just got into it. It wasn't even a decision. I started to be in the factory after school, and then I began to learn the handcraft. I started working in production at 17. It began with learning how to hammer cymbals to achieve a certain sound. In time, I became fascinated with finding all the possibilities and discovering what I was actually doing with my hands. I found out what vibrations do, and how it's possible to influence the metal. The fascination is that you have a piece of metal, you hammer it, you work on it, and then it responds, almost like a certain kind of communication. Then you learn how to influence it for your own wishes or targets.

"Toomas and I are both very lucky that we found the way to do what is in agreement with our abilities and with the people we really are. It was certainly helped by our father, who never forced us to take a certain direction, but just let it happen and grow. In a natural way, we found our satisfaction. I think it's a very lucky situation, because if you do what you really love, then you do it the best. It's a part of your life and yourself."

Creating sounds is indeed an integral part of Robert's life, and like any artist, some would describe him as eccentric. In his usual good humor, Robert laughs, "I wouldn't wonder! When you do something that is not just logical or technical, then you always deal with very creative, unconscious sources and dimensions. A lot of people don't understand you and find it crazy. It is crazy in a certain way. Think of music and composers. Composers get ideas and feelings, and hear the music in themselves."

Robert is passionate, however, about sounds. "Sound is vibration, and vibration is energy. Life energy is vibration and sound, also. So for me, sound is part of a very deep, basic truth. I am not the only one who feels like this. There are so many musical-minded drummers who get the same exciting feeling from playing their cymbals. It's not just the sound. It's the vibration, the touch, how it feels, and how it speaks to the drummer. It's just a wonderful feeling to produce something, hand it over to the drummers, and see them get the same response. There's a deep truth behind it."

For sound development, Robert applies the Paiste philosophy of communication with drummers. With such an abstract concept of sound, however, I was most curious as to how the conference dialogue might go. "Talking about sound is even more difficult and complicated than talking about feelings, although even this is very difficult. You need a base for communicating and understanding each other. I always had something to do with music and with drummers. Through the years, there has come an understanding of the necessities and wishes of drummers. Everything we are doing, we do for the drummers and for the music. That communication needs trust and understanding, and then we talk about it as we would talk about feelings. Drummers talk about sounds that they imagine. The precondition is that I know what kind of music they are playing, which helps me to understand them. Then, they just fantasize about certain sounds in connection with that music. Everybody uses different words and explanations. Somebody may explain a sound like a heavy feeling, a fresh breeze, or something dark and warm. Some people use colors, like, 'a green sound, but a little bit more on the blue side.' There is actually no logical determination. The communication just happens through talking for maybe a whole hour, and possibly using examples of other existing sounds or cymbals by saying, 'this sound, but more bright, or higher, or whispering.' Through this discussion, a certain understanding arises, and we start to hear a sound that is only in our imaginations. After that, through the experience and understanding of what to do with the metal, it is possible for us to translate this into what has to be done with the cymbal. Then we somehow

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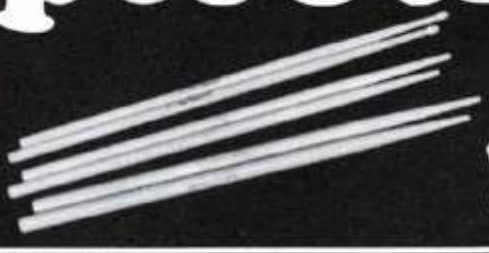

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know how the cymbal should be made to achieve that sound, and we talk about this with the people who are hammering and shaving. For the first samples, we might be close to the goal—maybe 70 or 80 percent. From then on, it's easier. Then we can manipulate the cymbal and correct the proportions, step by step, until we have reached that desired sound. Sometimes we get very close but don't reach it. It can be very frustrating, so we leave it for a while and come back to it a few months later. There's no way to make a blueprint and go by it. It's really seeking and finding. It's really a creative period, but it can be a period of suffering, also. Then there is a wonderful feeling when it is reached, and it's there. The prototypes go to the drummers for testing. Maybe a few corrections have to be made, but when it's there, it can be reproduced.

"This gives me a deep sense of inner satisfaction, and I feel thankful when it all comes together. It's really wonderful when somebody is not only appreciating what I put into it, but also really using it as it was intended. It is a really good feeling."

A Visit to the Paiste Factory *continued from page 24*

reminded." What about the training for this job? "It normally takes between three to six months of training before someone can make a *404.* Then after about two years, they are usually good enough to move on to the 505 range. It is between three and five years before anybody is good enough to make the top cymbals like *Sound Creation.* Some people reach a certain level—say 505—and never get beyond that, but we always need people to make the less expensive models. The more skilled people concentrate on the higher-quality cymbals, which require more precise and time-consuming work. That is one reason why some cymbals are more expensive than others."

If it is all the same two alloys and the same process of manufacture, what other reasons are there? "This is an interesting point: For the 2002, the *Rude,* the 505, and the *404,* it is all the same *alloy,* but it is treated differently at the metalworks before it reaches us. As we explained, a lot has been done during the casting and rolling processes, and the more we have done, the more it costs us. *On the other hand,* though, the metal plates that we get for making the 602 and *Sound Creation* ranges are exactly the same metal treated in exactly the same way. If you consider the difference in sound between a 602 and a *Sound Creation,* it gives you an idea of how we are able to influence the sound of our cymbals by the various things we do to them."

After the main hammering, each cymbal is carefully checked by one of the top craftsmen to make sure that the hammer patterns and the shape of the cymbal have been accurately achieved. He lays the cymbal on a large slate to check that the edge is absolutely flat, and he uses a hand-held hammer to finalize the shape of the cymbal in the traditional manner. The top-of-the-range cymbals require the most attention to assure the necessary high quality. Robert now demonstrates again the before and after sounds. Once it has been hammered, the cymbal looks and sounds quite respectable. "After hammering," he explains, "the cymbal has its basic character—whether it is high or low sounding—but by shaving it to certain thicknesses, we get more variations out of that character. This is what makes it a thin, medium, or heavy."

Shaving the cymbal does two things: It brings it down to the desired thickness and gives it the grooves, which affect the sound. The cymbal is turned vertically on a wheel, and while it spins, the shaving is done with a hand-held cutter. There is a horizontal rest that the craftsman uses to make sure that he moves the cutter from the edge to the center of the cymbal in a straight line. He constantly checks with a micrometer to make sure that he is shaving off the correct amount of metal; the tolerance within which he has to work is plus or minus 100th of a millimeter! Like his colleague who does the hammering, the craftsman who does the shaving has a card to tell him exactly what is required for each batch of cymbals.

You might have noticed that, whereas 602 cymbals have an even pattern of grooves going across them, the pattern on 2002s is uneven. There again, a *Rude* doesn't have any pattern on it at all. There are hammer marks but no grooves. The reason for these differences isn't cosmetic. It all has to do with the different sounds that Paiste gets from its different cymbal lines. Robert explains: "If you look at the *Rude* cymbal, it looks rough and raw. That is because it isn't shaved at all. It is hammered in a special way to produce a rough and raw sound and a high volume. As soon as a cymbal is shaved, it not only looks brighter and smoother, but the sound goes in the same way. On a subtler level, the difference in the grooves on the 602s and the 2002s contributes to the differences in the sound. Everything you have seen done up to this point in the process has a direct bearing on the way the cymbal is going to sound. We started with a raw disc; when we hit it, all we heard was different frequencies in a disorganized vibration pattern. After tempering and pressing the cup, the sound was changing because the vibrations were getting more organized. After hammering, it is beginning to sound clear and musical, and after shaving, we have gotten it to the point where all the vibrations are controlled just the way we want."

Next comes the only automated process in the whole cymbal-making procedure: smoothing off the rims to make sure that there are no rough edges. It is significant that, after showing such great enthusiasm for the tempering, hammering, and shaving processes, Robert Paiste just indicates this machine to me and says that it isn't very interesting. However, I need to get an idea of every stage of the process, so I ask to have a look at it anyway. "Sure," says Robert. The smoothing of the edges is very simple and obvious. The cymbal revolves on a turntable with the edges overlapping; as this happens, a cutter on the end of an arm is moved gently up and down against the edge. The pressure of the arm makes the cutter move slightly above and slightly below the edge, which gives it a rounded finish. I ask Robert whether this has any effect on the sound. "Not with the minimal amount of metal that we take off the edge; it makes no difference at all. Obviously, it would if we sliced a lot of metal off the

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edge, but we don't."

Now the cymbal is complete as far as metalwork and final sound are concerned, but there are still a few small jobs to be done on it. The Paiste logo and a serial number are punched into it on a machine that is in the dispatch department. The large colored lettering—"Paiste" top and bottom, and giving the cymbal line and type—is silk-screened on. There is also a specially developed coating that goes into the "pores" of the metal to protect the cymbals against fingerprints and stick marks. Robert says, "This coating isn't lacquer and it doesn't contain any coloring, but most important of all, it has no dampening effect on the sound of the cymbal. It doesn't last forever; it will come off eventually. We developed it because we kept hearing that dealers were having trouble as a result of people trying out different cymbals in the shops. The cymbals would become marked and begin to look 'shop soiled.' We now seem to have solved that particular problem for them."

What about the finish on the *Colorsound* line? That's something quite different, isn't it? "Oh yes. It's a specially developed process of color coating that is in combination with an individual sound development. Any usual method of adding paint to the surface of a cymbal will dampen the sound of that cymbal. It's like putting tape on it. In order to prevent this from happening, it was necessary for us, on the one hand, to develop a cymbal with very energetic vibrations, and on the other hand, to find a method of coloring the cymbal's surface so that the dampening effect would be as small as possible. The sound concept had to be found first. These cymbals are not just 2002 or 505 cymbals with color added. They are a special line."

Over a cup of coffee in Robert's office, I mention that one thing we haven't looked at or talked about is the process for making *Soundedge* cymbals. He says that there is a lot more to be done in the manufacture of *Soundedge,* which justifies their relatively high price, and goes on to explain: "The cymbal is hammered for the first time and shaved for the first time before the waves are put in. When the waves are put in, it changes the tension of the cymbal, so after that, it has to be re-hammered to counteract the effect that the process for putting in the waves has had. Then it is shaved a second time." I ask how the waves are put in. Robert smiles, thinks for a moment, and says, "If you don't mind, I'd rather we didn't go into that."

Now we have been joined by Swiss jazz drummer Fredy Studer. Fredy once worked for Paiste as a cymbal tester and also in their Drummer Service department. These days, his musical commitments take him all over Europe, but he is still retained by Paiste as a consultant. The factory tour isn't over yet; in fact, for me as a user, the most interesting parts are still to come.

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We go to the testing room where I am in for a surprise. The fact that every single cymbal is tested before it leaves the factory is no surprise. However, what does surprise me is the fact that, not only is each cymbal tested to make sure that it is without fault and that the sound it produces is worth what the customer is going to have to pay for it, but it must also conform, within very strict limits, to the sound of its particular type. This is, of course, one of the main cornerstones of the Paiste cymbal-making program. Drummers know that the sound of a particular Paiste cymbal can be duplicated by buying another of the same type, size, and weight. Paiste claims that this gives them an advantage over other manufacturers, because the knowledge that a given cymbal isn't a "one of a kind" and that, if it is lost, the balance of the whole cymbal set won't be ruined by the necessary inclusion of another, different-sounding cymbal gives drummers confidence in the product. Seeing cymbals tested alongside a "master" cymbal shows me just how well placed this confidence is. Any cymbal that doesn't come within a certain sound range of the master is scrapped. "Even if it is a perfectly good sounding cymbal?" I ask incredulously. "Yes, I'm afraid so," says Fredy, "because it wouldn't be typical. If it's not accurate to what it should be, it won't be what the drummer expects."

I ask whether there is very much wastage due to cymbals not passing the "sound test." Robert says, "Only three to five percent. Sometimes cymbals come through that are slightly outside the tolerance. This might happen during the hammering, and it could be too little to notice. The same thing might happen with the shaving. It could be slightly out, but only so slightly that you wouldn't hear it. However, if it happens with the hammering *and* the shaving, the mistakes accumulate, and the end result will be too far away from the 'master' sound."

All the testing is done by ear. The master cymbal and the one to be tested are set up next to each other on stands. The tester plays one and then the other. He plays each part of the cymbal, comparing the sounds in different places and making sure that there are no dull spots. If he has any doubts, he will ask one of the other testers to try the cymbal for him. Before a cymbal is scrapped, Robert Paiste's opinion is usually sought as well. The testing depends on the ears of the testers. The only "trick" I can glean is that it is important for the sticks used to be in proportion to the sound and properties of the cymbal being tested. A loud, heavy cymbal, for instance, wouldn't "speak" and give off its full range of vibrations if it were only played with a light stick.

The display room at Nottwil is nothing short of a wonderland for a drummer to visit. Here you can see and hear all 500 of Paiste's different cymbals, plus Paiste's gongs, crotales, circular tuned sound discs, and the rectangular sound plates. (These tuned sound discs, incidentally, are produced on a lathe and tuned with the aid of an oscilloscope.) In addition to the cymbals for kit drummers and percussionists in the jazz, rock, and orchestral fields, Paiste has a special new range of marching cymbals, which has been developed for the American market. These are *1000* and *900* professional-quality models, and the 500 range, which are lighter and for use in schools.

Fredy takes me briefly through the history of the Paiste cymbals: The 602 was developed at a time when most music was acoustic with limited amplification. It has a clear and delicate sound. The *Giant Beat* (which is no longer made) responded to a need for louder cymbal sounds to go with louder amplification. The 2002 came in during the early '70s, when amplified music was becoming more musical and drummers were demanding a cymbal that had the musical properties of the 602 with more richness and power. The more recent *Rude* was created for the "raw power" of some modern music. The 505 and *404* ranges are less expensive but still boast the Paiste handmade quality.

"Now," says Robert, "we want to show you something that we are very proud of; you won't find this with any cymbals except ours. When we develop a cymbal line, we don't only consider the sounds of the individual cymbals, but we *also* take into consideration the corresponding musical sounds of all the cymbals in that range. So within the same size of cymbal, the different weights are built up in musical steps, and within the same weight, the different sizes are also built up in musical steps. This way, we make sure that, whatever combination you pick out for your personal set, the cymbals will always correspond in a musical way. If you happen to use a set of cymbals that doesn't correspond musically, you can find that the overlapping sounds can cause an unmusical vibration which becomes a distortion."

Fredy, meanwhile, has set up nine 2002 cymbals on stands in a square formation. They are in groups of three; across the square in one direction, they are arranged in sizes: 16", 18", and 20". In the other direction, they are arranged by weight: thin, medium, and heavy. (I hope you have got that!) Fredy pings each cymbal in turn. "As you must realize, it is a physical law with cymbals that, the more weight you have on cymbals with the same diameter, the higher the sound becomes. Alternatively, the wider the diameter on cymbals with the same thickness, the lower the sound. As I play from high to low and from low to high on cymbals with the same weights but different diameters *and* on cymbals with the same diameters but different weights, you will hear that the steps are equal and musical." He plays along a row of three thin cymbals, then three medium cymbals, and then three heavy cymbals. Now changing direction, he plays three 16" cymbals—light to heavy—and repeats on the 18s and then the 20s. First, he stops each cymbal ringing before striking the next one, and the musical progression is clear. He then repeats the routine, but this time allowing the cymbals to ring. The progression is still clear: The ringing of one cymbal takes nothing away from the sound of another, and the overlapping tones blend perfectly. Fredy then plays diagonally across the square, getting the extremes—16" thin to 20" heavy, and 16" heavy to 20" thin—with the 18" medium in the middle, and the sound blend is still there.

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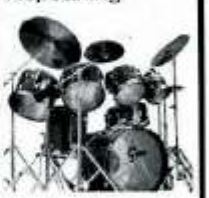
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particular lines, or whether it still works if you mix up Paiste cymbals from different lines. In answer, Fredy removes the 18" medium 2002, and replaces it with a 602 of the same size and weight. Now the sound is different, but the musical blend is definitely still there and so is the step in sound from one cymbal to the next.

Robert says, "This is a far-reaching concept. It gives us a lot more work. Not only do we have to develop each sound in itself, but we also take care of the musical matching within the particular line *and* with the other lines we make. People don't realize that we do this on purpose, but perhaps that isn't so important, because they *do* realize that, whenever they put together a set of Paiste cymbals, the sounds match. Different sounds are not just thrown together and called a cymbal line. It is a whole concept of sounds that we provide."

"He's a good spokesman," says Fredy. Robert grins, "I'm getting better all the time. I've been explaining myself in English all day, and I improve with practice!"

I indicate the wealth of sounds around us and say, "And all this with just two basic alloys and handcrafting." Robert Paiste nods and smiles contentedly, "Anyone can use the same alloys, but they won't be able to produce what we produce. It's similar to art: Different painters might use the same paints, but their paintings won't be the same."

Drummer Service continued from page 25

right for it. What do you suggest I try?' Then we go from there. That's one part of the job. The other part of the job is sound development—research and development of new products—traveling around the country or even L.A. proper, talking to different drummers to find out what they need or are missing. A lot of times it's, 'This is great. This is exactly what I need,' or 'It's not quite right. It needs some of this and some of that. Can you make me something that will do that?' If we get that type of information from a lot of different drummers all over the world, we may find there's definitely a need for something like :hat, and we will make it for them."

Readers Platform continued from page 4

RESPONSE TO CANTY

In response to Ed Canty's "Electronic Sameness" letter (July '85 *Reader's Platform),* I have to admit to being more than a little troubled—maybe even a bit angry. I have been playing electronic drums for two years now, and I feel that the potential for your "own unique sound" is greatly multiplied—not limited—with electronics. We are at a point in time where any sound imaginable—or even sounds that have never been heard before—can be played by a drummer. How is that limiting? What about all the acoustic players who sound the same? I feel that the only thing that will keep a drummer in the background is his or her inability to be creative in any given situation—not his or her instrument.

For example, I don't have the original chips that came with my *SDS7* kit. The EPROMs I currently use were sampled by a friend of mine who uses many of the same chips himself. We don't sound anything alike! We have different ears, different technique, and we play different music, yet we use many of the same digital sounds.

I'm not saying that I don't love acoustic drums or that *they* are limiting. I just feel that, no matter what drummers choose to play—an expensive electronic setup or a log—the only thing keeping them from being unique is their imagination.

Frank Briggs
Syracuse, NY

RESPONSE TO McCABE

I am troubled by Frank McCabe's conviction that "most, if not all, great men" are or were drum fanatics to some degree [*Reader'sPlatform,* July '85]. I can appreciate his enthusiasm for great drummers, and I am sure many drummers are also great men (consider Blakey, Jones, and other elder statesmen of the art). Furthermore, I have been deeply inspired by countless artists ranging from Tony Williams to Maureen Tucker. This aside, however, I am dismayed that you printed his letter at all.

Most of Mr. McCabe's examples of "great men" include entertainment or sports figures, certainly not "great men" in the sense of having imparted eternal wisdom or having conferred invaluable benefits on humanity. To my thinking, great men include immortal geniuses such as Mozart, Milton, Newton, Picasso—not mere entertainers.

For you to print a line like "drummers are the most extraordinary and talented people in the world" seems to be a grave error, because it falsely exalts drummers into a state of narcissistic hero-worship. Granted, some drummers are extraordinary, but even those rare performers are not necessarily more talented than artists in other fields. I am as obsessed with drums and drummers as the next person, but you at *MD* should not publish—and tacitly condone—letters that make hyperbolic declarations with little basis in logic.

To change the subject: I could not survive the month without receiving my copy of your *great* magazine.

Steve Hamelman
Orono, ME

SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

I decided to write this letter after I read one that you published in the July *Reader's Platform.* The writer had some very kind words to say about the Premier drum company. I'm sure Premier is a great company, but as a Yamaha player I felt obligated to speak out. I've been playing Yamaha drums for some time now, and I feel that they're the best drums made. Each of their three lines is good enough to be considered professional drums. Sure, you're going to pay a few extra dollars for them, but what is the price set on quality? And quality is exactly what you get with Yamaha.

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Steve Nadler
Rockville, MD

This is just a quick note to say "thanks" for your help in dealing with Slingerland regarding the warranty on my drums. Slingerland decided to replace my drum shells (with the exception of my bass drums, which they no longer manufacture). I am very much satisfied with my new drums. Many thanks again, and keep up the good work.

Mike Schneider
Jackson, MI

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by Donald Quade

Cappella:
Quietly Sticking With It

John and brother Tom Cappella examine dowels ready for final shaping.

There is an insurance corporation that advertises itself as "The Quiet Company." Among drumstick manufacturers, that title would unquestionably have to go to the Cappella Company. Although not a name seen in advertisements or on music store shelves, Cappella drumsticks account for a major portion of all the sticks used in the U.S. In fact, if you've ever used a stick with a drum company's name on it, there's a good chance that you've actually been playing with a stick manufactured by Cappella. That's because this small New Jersey company fabricates the sticks sold by some of the major drum companies as their "own brand."

This situation is anything but new. In fact, Cappella has been "quietly" making drumsticks for over 23 years. The plant makes as many as 1.5 million sticks per year, in addition to other percussion-related products such as timpani mallets, bass drum beaters, woodblocks, claves, slapsticks, and just about anything else fashioned of wood. Cappella also makes products for other industries, notably police nightsticks and riot batons, beer tap handles, and other specialty items.

The Cappella company (originally profiled in the April '78 issue of *MD)* is a family owned and operated concern. John Cappella is president. John's brother Tom runs the plant, along with Production Manager Donald Zaleski; both have been with the company for 23 years. John's son Carmen plans to join the business full-time after completing his education.

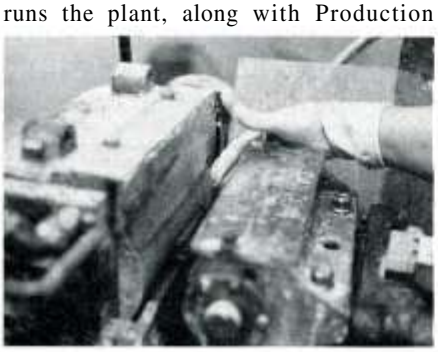
Any company that can survive in the rapidly changing music industry for 23 years—especially when directly serving the needs of other companies as a franchised product supplier—must have the ability to respond to consumer needs and desires, as well as the foresight to seek out new and improved products to offer the consumer. The Cappella company certainly epitomizes this axiom.

For example, while the business is mainly in hickory (simply because that wood is, according to John Cappella, "The only wood in the world that can absorb 95% of 'stick shock' due to its cellular structure"), experimentation with other materials has taken place. The result is that, today, a significant amount of corporate energy has gone into the production of two new stick lines: *Densiwood* and a material with the generic name of *Staypak.* Before examining these two new materials, however, a brief comparison of the Cappella operation to those of other drumstick manufacturers is in order.

Production Methods

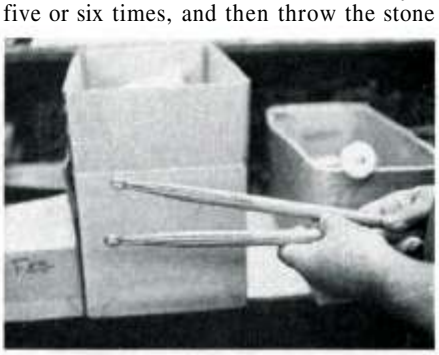
Similarities to the production methods of other drumstick companies end with the fact that 80% of the sticks are made of hickory or maple. From that point on, the *differences* become more notable. For example, although John is quick to point out that the personal care he takes in selecting his wood is a critical part of the entire operation, much of the actual milling is done prior to the material's arrival at his shop. The wood comes in short lengths of pre-cut square stock called "squares." John feels that having the material pre-cut and delivered in this manner makes for less waste, since unusable sections of lumber can be rejected at the mill, thus reducing bulk drying and shipping costs for him. He also has the wood dried (to his own specifications) by the mill, rather than doing it at his factory. Basically, the shop is involved with only the final shaping and finishing of drumsticks (and other products).

In terms of the sequence of events, the squares are run through a doweling machine to create dowels of a specific, basic size for each stick model. A second machine rounds a butt end onto each dowel. Then, the dowel is put through a shaper. Eschewing lathes as "outmoded," Cappella shapes its sticks with a grindstone, under careful supervision. Each stick is size-checked immediately after coming off the grinder, so any imperfections can be discovered and rejected as soon as they occur. According to Don Zaleski, "We switched from lathing to stone grinding 12 or 15 years ago. We find that we lose a lot fewer sticks this way, and we can make them a whole lot more accurately. Every stick is gauged for a 'go/no go' tolerance of plus or minus five thousandths. They're that close. With a lathe, as the knives dull, the stick head tends to grow on you, although you wouldn't see it happening. And then the sticks were being sanded by hand on top of that, and if the sandpaper was new, you'd be taking a little bit more off the head. We find that the stone grinding is a much more exact process. When a stone starts to break down at its edge, it'll start to leave a little "tip" visible on the stick. We simply remove the stone and re-dress it. We have a template for each stick, and we can dress each stone with a diamond tool. It just makes the stone a little bit smaller. We do this maybe five or six times, and then throw the stone



The shaping machine employs a unique grindstone process to create the stick silhouette.

Don Zaleski demonstrates how hylon tips are applied, through a pressure glueing process.



Staypak *drum corps sticks, showing extra laminations placed in the shoulder to increase weight and give a unique appearance.*

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Vestal, NY
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3A

Michael Behlmar
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737

Leonard Britz
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out. But in that time, we can get 20 or 30 thousand sticks."

After shaping, the stick is sanded, diplacquered, and (if nylon-tipped) fitted with its tip. The nylon tips are made by an outside company, and are turned on precision screw-making machinery to exact specifications. At the Cappella shop they are heated in an oven, and then hand-fitted onto the sticks by a glue-and-pressure process. Tiny ridges ground in the stick itself act as retaining rings for the tips, and the glue is formulated to penetrate the lacquer and bond the nylon directly with the wood. According to Don Zaleski, "The only way to get a tip off is to break it off."

Densiwood

When *MD* first visited the Cappella stick factory, the company was experimenting with resin-impregnated sticks, in an effort to increase stick durability. Unfortunately, this experiment proved unsuccessful, since the sticks were inflexible and "shocky." Undaunted, John Cappella continued his search for materials or methods to improve stick design and manufacture. His next effort involved the use of a material created for institutional furniture and industrial applications of wood where exceptional strength and durability were required. This material is known as *Densiwood,* and is created by a process known as "densifying." Basically, hickory wood is compressed, under many thousands of pounds of pressure, keeping the basic cell structure and composition of the natural wood, but increasing its density—and thus its strength and resiliency—severalfold. The resulting stick is heavier than a natural hickory stick in the same size and many times more durable.

This stick has proven to be quite popular, and Cappella has difficulty keeping up with demand. As John puts it, "We still want to retain quality control over the wood initially. So rather than buying the *Densiwood* direct from the factory that makes it [Lundstrom Labs in Frankfort, New York], we first select the raw wood ourselves, and then ship it to them for 'densifying.' After the material is created, it has to be cut with carbide tools. It comes back to us as squares, which we turn into sticks here. Now, it takes about 60 days from the time we ship them the raw lumber to the time they ship us the squares. Then there might be another 30 days before the processing here is finished. So that's 90 days to make that stick a stick. Consequently, production output is limited. Although we knock the sticks out as soon as the material arrives, we're limited on the material due to the time factor. The end result is that we ship the sticks as soon as we make them; we can't keep any in stock."

Staypak

Just a few years ago, John began to search for an even stronger, heavier material to offer drummers who needed virtually unbreakable, ultra-powerful sticks. He knew that, if he could control density or hardness and eliminate internal defects (both major problems with natural hickory of even the finest grade), he would have a winner. He reasoned that, if a stick could actually be created of hardwood veneers (or layers) that had already been selected as defect-free, that would solve the problem. He learned that a veneered product with controlled density was replacing hickory in the textile industry. That product had a generic name of *Staypak.* It's made by heating and compressing a given number of pre-coated veneers of maple wood and compressing them, along with an adhesive. The heat bonds the adhesive and the veneers together, while the pressure reduces the thickness about 20% by allowing the cementing material to flow between the cellulose fibers. This reduction in thickness increases the density by compressing more cellulose fibers into a smaller space, thereby adding to strength and wear characteristics.

John arranged for the manufacturer of the *Staypak* material to supply him with squares, and found that sticks could be successfully developed from them. He also found a few surprises in terms of manufacturing.

According to Don Zaleski, "Sticks made of the *Staypak* material are processed on the same machinery as the hickory, but must be done much slower. For instance, when squares of hickory are turned on the doweling machine, we can take them down about 3/16" without much trouble—without the machine twisting the stick and causing a warped effect. But with the *Staypak,* 1/16" is tops. Otherwise, the sticks become jammed, and every fifth stick or so is ruined, making the process very unprofitable. Consequently, production of the *Staypak* sticks is slower, and overall volume is lower. This is simply due to the hardness of the material."

Another discovery was that, due to the extreme hardness and non-porosity of the laminated *Staypak* sticks, they cannot be successfully lacquered. So each stick is hand-rubbed to a natural luster, and the resulting finish resembles fine furniture.

Staypak sticks have proven to be very popular with drum corps, due to their extreme weight-to-size ratio. Also, cus-

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tomized laminations have been created, adding layers just at the shoulder of the sticks. In addition to putting extra weight at the "business end" of the stick, the darker layers add a nice visual touch to the movement of the stick.

Comparing the *Staypak* and *Densiwood* sticks, one would find that the *Densiwoods* are somewhat lighter than the *Staypak* (although much heavier than hickory), and have more "wearability." They will chip and fray in much the same way as natural wood sticks, since in fact they are simply "densified" wood. But this process will take a much longer time with *Densiwood* than with hickory, and the sticks are much less likely to break outright. *Staypak* sticks are much harder, and won't wear away much at all. They are an incredibly hard, heavy stick, and best suited for high-power applications where ultimate power and durability is required from a stick.

Distribution

It has been mentioned before that Cappella supplies sticks to most of the major drum companies. At present, it is offering all of its stick lines (hickory, maple, *Densiwood, Staypak)* through these channels. Some companies supplied by Cappella give special promotional names of their own to the *Densiwood* or *Staypak* sticks, while others choose not to name the material at all, preferring simply to advertise "their" stick as being very hard and durable.

Cappella does market its own *Prima* by Cappella line, which includes both hickory and *Densiwood* sticks. These are distributed exclusively by the Continental Music Company.

Customization

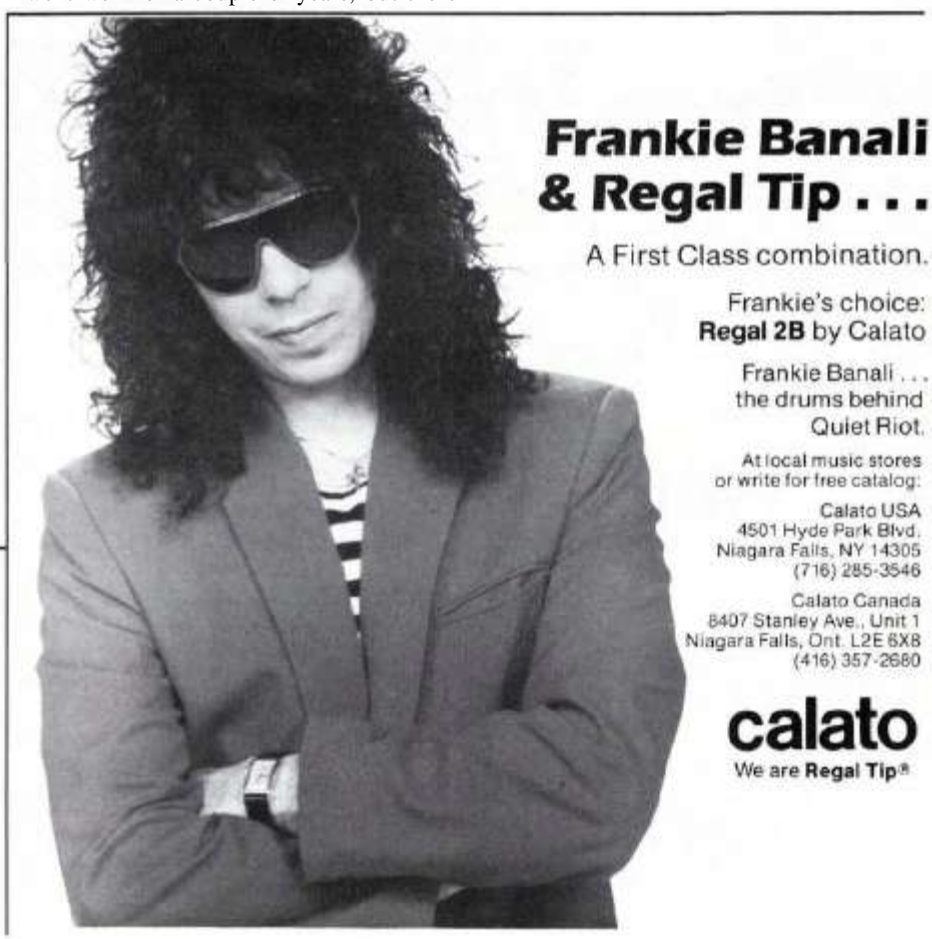
Cappella also supplies customized sticks directly to various artists. Foreigner's Dennis Elliot and Mountain's Corky Laing are among those who receive their sticks direct from the Cappella shop. The Young American Showcase, which comprises about eight musical groups in Florida, buys 2,500 to 5,000 pairs per year. Artists can actually come into the shop and design their own sticks. As John Cappella explains: "It doesn't take long. We can design a stick for someone while that person is here. We just keep making them by hand until the design is right. Then, we make a tool for our shaping machine to create that shape. Of course, the artist pays for the tooling, because it's special. We have a lot of shelf tooling waiting just for these people. The minimum order just to make a pilot run has to be about 1,000 to 1,500 pairs." How do the ideas come about for a special-design stick? "Someone will usually come in with an existing model, and say something like, 'This is what I like, but can you make the head smaller?' So we'll change that. Then it's, 'Can the shaft be longer, or shorter, or lighter?' And whatever it is, we modify it until we come up with a prototype for a blueprint.

"We make specialty sticks, such as 'tambourine' sticks with mounted jingles. We make sticks with felt mallet ends—the Stanley Krell stick. We get a lot of crazy things here. At one time, we made drumsticks with three heads. They weren't a joke, either. They were a specialty item, sure, but you had to be a good drummer to use them. They involved a regular nylon-tip stick, with two additional nylon heads attached by nylon line, so that they were on either side of the main tip. It was sort of a pitchfork-looking design. You could really get some ride out of them—hearing the ping. You could hit with just the two outside heads, or with just the center one, or with all three. Al Menard, of Massachusetts, designed and patented them, and we manufactured them for him in 1967. They went well for a couple of years, but there wasn't enough promotion or product education on them—drummers had to be taught how to use them—so they didn't last."

The Future

A successful company must always be looking ahead, so it's not surprising that John Cappella sees a future in synthetic drumsticks as well as wood. Although he feels that there is no problem today in obtaining quality hickory (and that there is not likely to be in the foreseeable future), he does agree that the cost of that hickory will be going up. Experiments in stick durability have already yielded *Densiwood* and *Staypak* sticks; John feels it is only logical—and sensible—to get into totally synthetic sticks as well. Although details cannot be released at this time, Cappella is currently in negotiation with a company already experienced in synthetic drumstick manufacturing to obtain tooling and materials.

John sums up his philosophy by saying, "We won't turn anything down. We're always looking for new products, new ways to make sticks, and new materials. We've done it with thousands of items that just fell by the wayside. There isn't anything that I won't try to make our industry better. I work for the industry, and I don't care what it costs me to do it. If somebody comes up with a new innovation, I'll research it."



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by Gary Chester

Systems For Coordination And Reading

All drummers develop their own patterns, beats and methods of execution as they grow as musicians. However, when playing in the studios they come up against a variety of vastly different musical situations. During my many years in the studio I dealt with many different producers, some of whom played a little bit of drums, and some of whom wanted tricky and unique drum parts. I would take 15 minutes and write the parts out, then play them in the studio, and then take the parts home and file them away. I accumulated quite a few of what I call "systems"—things that weren't based on normal, everyday drum playing. These systems are designed to develop coordination, musicality, reading ability, and confidence.

These systems are not designed to be played strictly as exercises, but used as tools to develop new musical ideas. In the studio, you must be prepared to play an incredible variety of musical genres—jazz, rock, Latin, fusion, country, etc. The material contained within these systems can be applied to any and all musical styles.

Another aspect of studio playing is sight reading. You should be able to sight-read anything without any problem. Of course, even if you are a great reader, if you come across some tricky patterns and you don't have the coordination to go with the reading, it will throw you. Therefore, these systems will promote advanced reading and coordination not only of single-line drum parts, but multi-line drum parts as well.

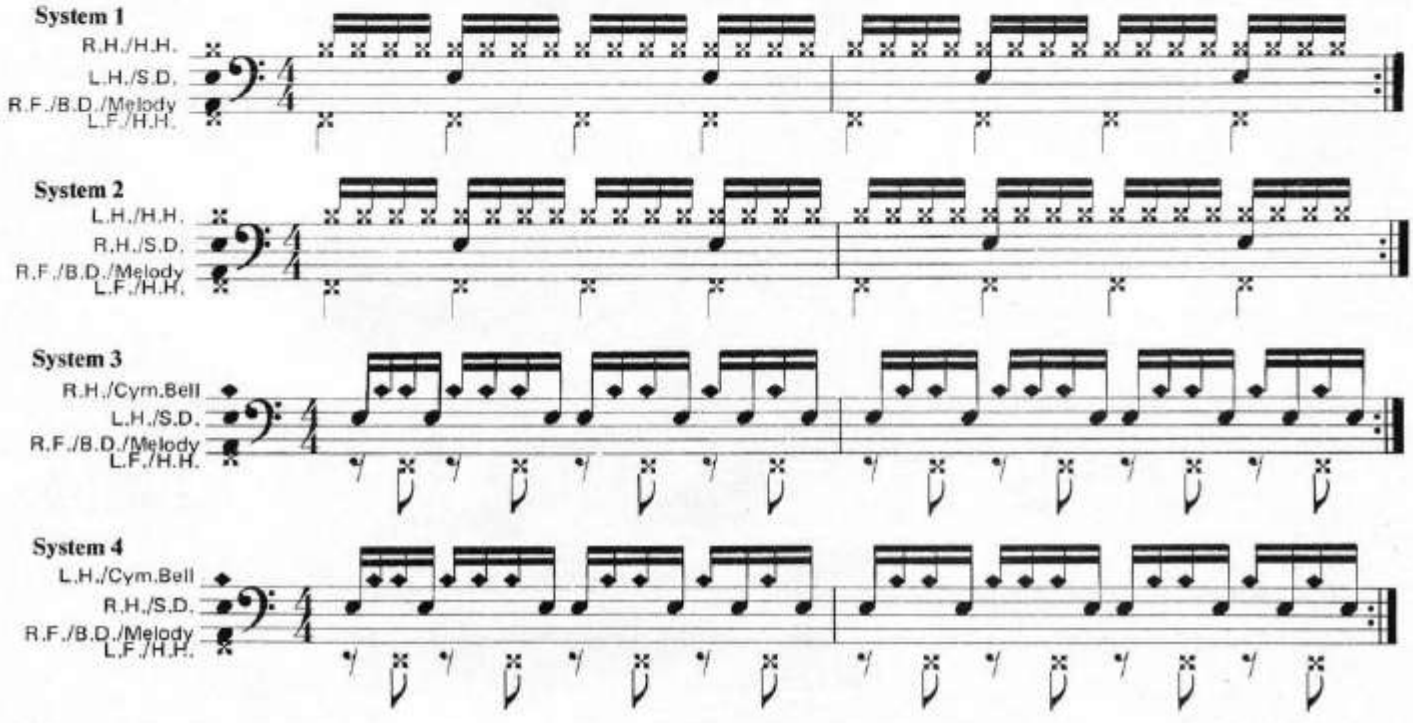
The main benefit of mastering these systems, however, is the development of individual creativity. All musicians need inspiration and material to continue their own musical growth. Hopefully, the information contained in these systems will provide you with new possibilities and ideas for continued musical development. The systems will prepare you for things you might encounter in the studio—reading, coordination, flexibility. They will also prepare you to be part of current musical trends, and to create the music of the future.

In this article, we will deal with four of my systems. In the first one, the right hand plays 16th notes on the hi-hat, the left hand plays backbeats on the snare drum, the left foot plays quarter-note pulse on the hi-hat, and the right foot plays the "melody" on the bass drum. The second system is the same, except that the hands are reversed.

The third and fourth systems are more advanced. In System 3, the right hand stays on the bell of the ride cymbal, the snare drum is played with the left hand, the hi-hat plays 8th-note upbeats, and the bass drum plays the "melody." The fourth system is the same, except that the hands are reversed.

I recommend using a closed hi-hat on the right side of the kit, so that when you are playing hi-hat with the right hand (as in the first system), you do not have to cross your hands. In my setup, this hi-hat is mounted over the floor tom, just below my ride cymbal. When riding on the hi-hat with the left hand (as in the second system), use the regular hi-hat.

I suggest that these systems be played with a metronome, or a click track, as this is what you will be using in the studio. Also, you should sing the click track pulse, so that you feel it internally. This will help you understand exactly where the quarter is, and how everything you play relates to it.

You may need to work out the coordination of each bar of the melody individually, but eventually you should be able to play straight through it. If this melody is too difficult, take a page from any good drum book that uses quarter notes and 8th notes, and use that as the melody. The idea is to be able to play these systems while sight-reading *anything* on the bass drum.

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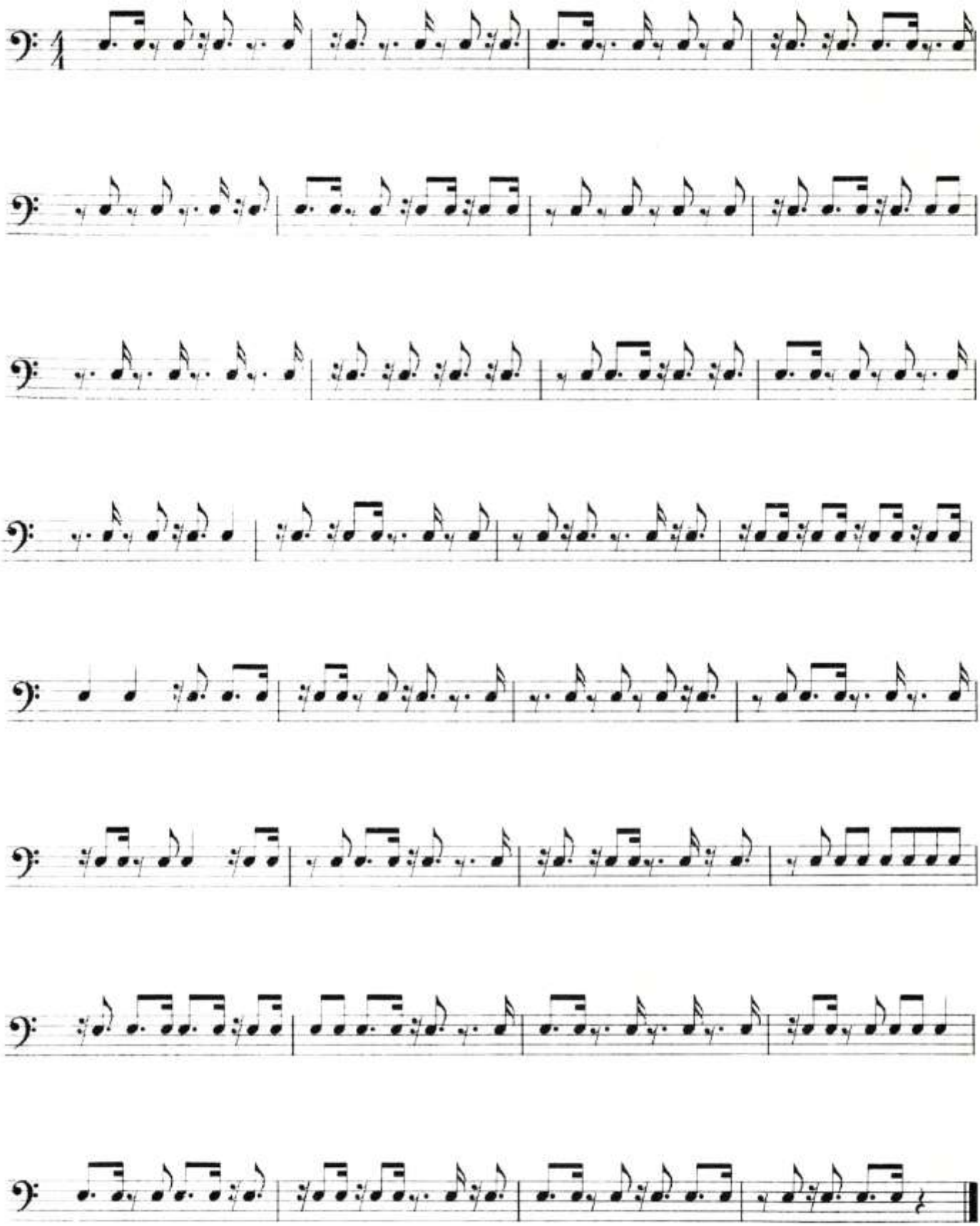
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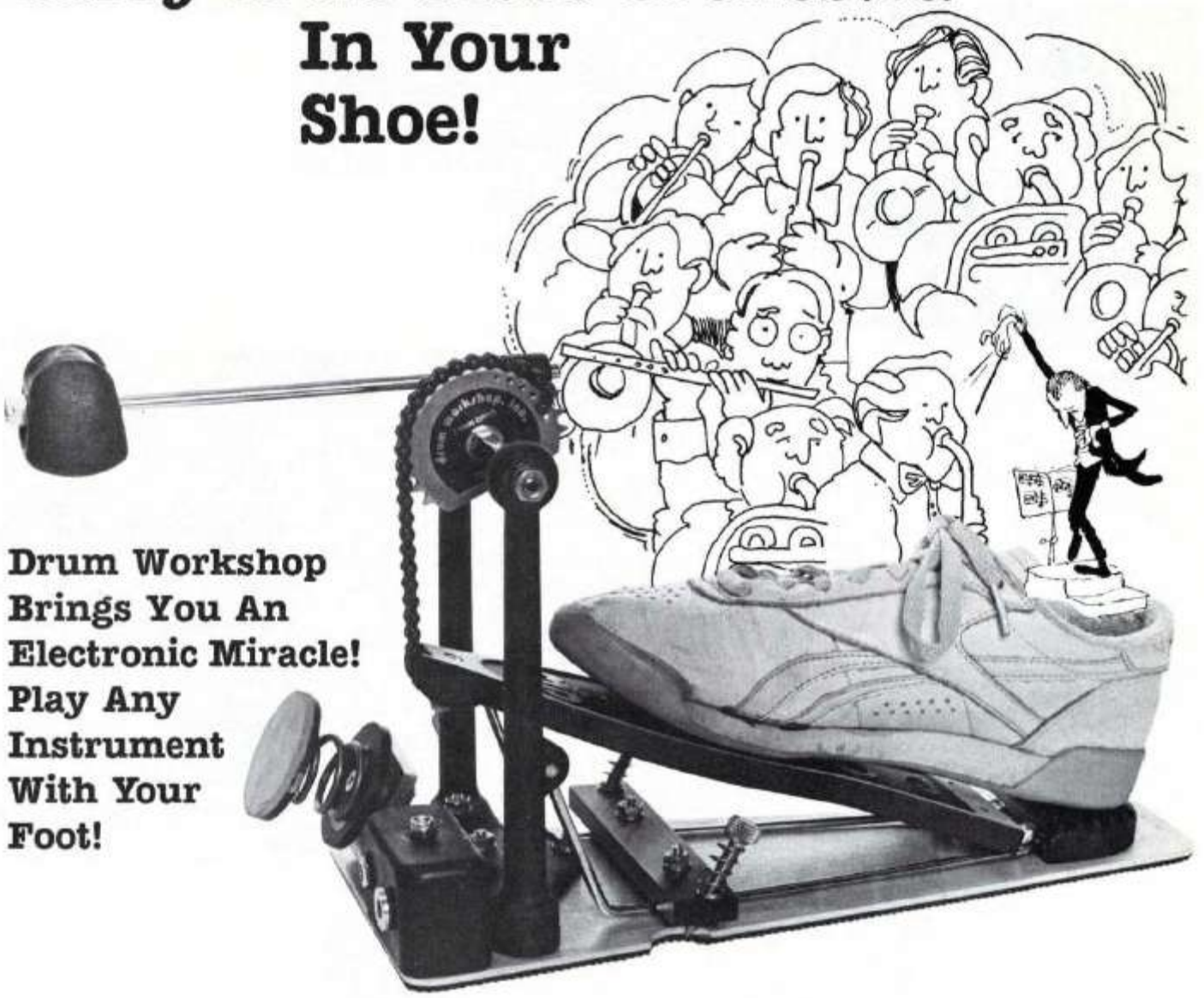

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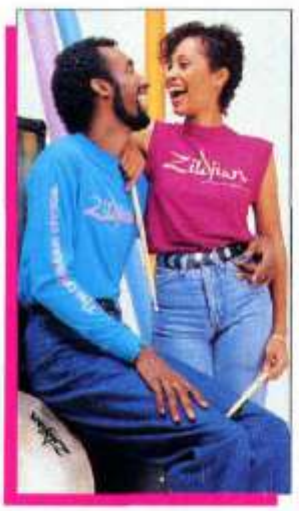

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Q. I am 19 and have been drumming for about seven years. I've played in concert, jazz, marching, and rock bands. I've never really had any problem keeping good time until lately. I've been reading a lot of interviews with studio drummers in your magazine, all of which say that the most important part of drumming in studio work is your time. After reading this, I started worrying about it; consequently, when I play now, that's all I think about, which causes me to play very erratically. What can I do about this, and does this happen to a lot of other people?

D.W.
Waverly, IL

A. The problem you are describing is one of simple anxiety. Yes, it is true that most top studio players stress the importance of time. But they also stress that that time must feel natural, and that the playing should be relaxed, rather than mechanical. In other words, you should have the ability to play with solid time, but you shouldn't have to concentrate exclusively on that. The way to have good time when playing is to practice with a metronome or other timekeeping device—when your concentration can appropriately be devoted to timekeeping—in order to develop your sense of time to the point where you don't need *to think about it when you perform.*

Q. About two years ago, I purchased a Tama *Swingstar* set with a metallic white finish. While talking with my local music store dealer, I was informed that Tama does not make the *Swingstar* series in that color anymore. If this is true, what can I do to add on to my set?

B.S.
Tinton Falls, NJ

A. Tama has informed us that Swingstar *drums are still available in the metallic white finish. The difficulty may lie in how your music dealer receives his or her supply of drums. Tama distributes drums through Chesebro Music in the western U.S., and through Hoshino USA in the East. Those distributors have found that some finishes are more popular than others. Consequently, music retailers find it easier to obtain those finishes from them. However, your dealer can place an order for the model and color you want, and it can be supplied. There might be a bit more time involved, but there would be no extra cost.*

Q. In the July, 1985 issue of *MD,* there is a letter in the *Reader's Platform* department from Charles Braun, the president of the Buddy Rich Fan Club in Warminster, Pennsylvania. Can you furnish a street address? I want to join that club!

C.K.
Hackensack, NJ

A. You may contact the Buddy Rich Fan Club at P.O. Box 2014, Warminster, PA 18974.

Q. I'm experiencing a problem with my Drum Workshop double pedal. I use the *DW5002DC,* which uses a double-clamp system to attach the beater section of the double pedal to the bass drum hoop, rather than the large metal base plate that combines the secondary beater section and the primary pedal into one assembly. I play Yamaha drums, and the pedal clamps seem to slip off the bass drum hoop under heavy playing. Can you offer any suggestions to correct this problem?

C.O.
Verona, NJ

A. The problem you are having is due to the fact that Yamaha's bass drum hoops are thicker than any other brand. DW's hoop clamps are designed to be as universally applicable as possible. Consequently, they fit everyone's hoops except Yamaha's. (This also goes for DW's single bass drum pedals.) Don Lombardi, President of Drum Workshop, has informed us that it is their intention to make sure that anyone can use a DW pedal, no matter what brand of drums is being played. If you will contact Don at Drum Workshop, 2697 Lavery Ct., Unit 16, Newbury Park, CA 91320 (805) 499-6863, he will arrange to send you a new set of hoop clamps specially designed to fit Yamaha hoops—at no charge. Don further states that any owner of Yamaha drums who is considering the purchase of a DW single or double pedal need only inform his or her dealer, and the appropriate fittings will be supplied when the product is shipped—also at no charge.

Q. I own a 6 1/2" Ludwig bronze snare drum. I love the sound, but have had trouble with the snare strings breaking. I've checked the snare bed for burrs, and I currently use moleskin to reinforce the string where it hits metal—with only moderate success. Is it possible for Ludwig to provide replacement hardware for the snare strainer so that plastic strips, rather than string, could hold the snares in place?

B.R.
Baltimore, MD

A. We checked with Jim Catalano at Ludwig, who informed us that there is no replacement hardware available to convert your snare strainer from string to tape strips. However, he did offer a suggestion you might try. Ludwig has noted that drums that feature its die-cast hoops tend to be hard on snare strings, due to the sharper angle of the hoop. What has proven successful for many drummers in the past is to switch from standard string to shoelaces—particularly those used on athletic shoes. These laces are of a braided design, and are extremely durable. Once "broken in," they will hold snare tension very well in most applications.

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SIMMONS

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For the past year, Talas drummer **Mark Miller** has been touring with the group. When he first began doing road work with the band, which has been together for over two years, he says that he had to work on building the stamina required for their heavy music.

"I remember first starting, and I couldn't believe it. I had been out of the rock 'n' roll regime for about two years. Getting back into it, I couldn't believe the stamina it took to play with Billy [Sheehan, bassist]. To keep up that pace was quite a challenge. I work out every day, especially on the road, and I spend a lot of time rehearsing in the hotel rooms. I work out before the shows, doing sit-ups and all kinds of exercises. It's kind of grueling, especially in the heat. It was 113° when we played Phoenix. We were on stage for a little over an hour, and it was exciting every night. The physical part is what really attracts me to this, though. The recording is alright, but there's nothing like the feel of playing in front of a lot of crazy people."

Because the band's lead instrument is the bass, Mark says it allows him a freedom most drummers don't have. "A lot of drummers have to play in the pocket," he explains, "but Billy is taking over the lead part of the band, so it allows me to bounce off of what he is doing in the lead sense. Sometimes it becomes so intense between him and me that I've seen him put his bass down on stage and walk off. It's funny, because we come from different backgrounds, really. He was more into classical music as a younger player, and I got more into the jazz and fusion thing. I don't know how we connect, but we do.

"When the band first started, it was Billy, the vocalist, and me. Billy and I would get together and rehearse—just bass and drums alone. We worked out things where I have a consistent snare drum and kick drum beat, steady throughout the song, and then I work other things around that, so we always have that basis, like in a conventional song. When it comes time for a flourish or an embellishment, though, it is on top of all that, without destroying it. It really works out well. It kind of changed my outlook on playing. It's more than just playing four measures, going off on a roll, and then coming back in. It's a matter of going off while maintaining the beat throughout the whole thing. I'll pick up on vocal licks and guitar licks, but Billy is the guy to key in on. He makes the music really happen, and we all push in the direction he's going in." — *Robyn Flans*

For the past year, **Jim Ingle** has been working with the Pointer Sisters in rather an ideal situation. "My wife, Leslie, has done their wardrobe for about three years, so I became acquainted with the girls through her. When the position opened up, away I went. It's great because I love the music, and my wife and I get to travel together, which is kind of rare in the industry."

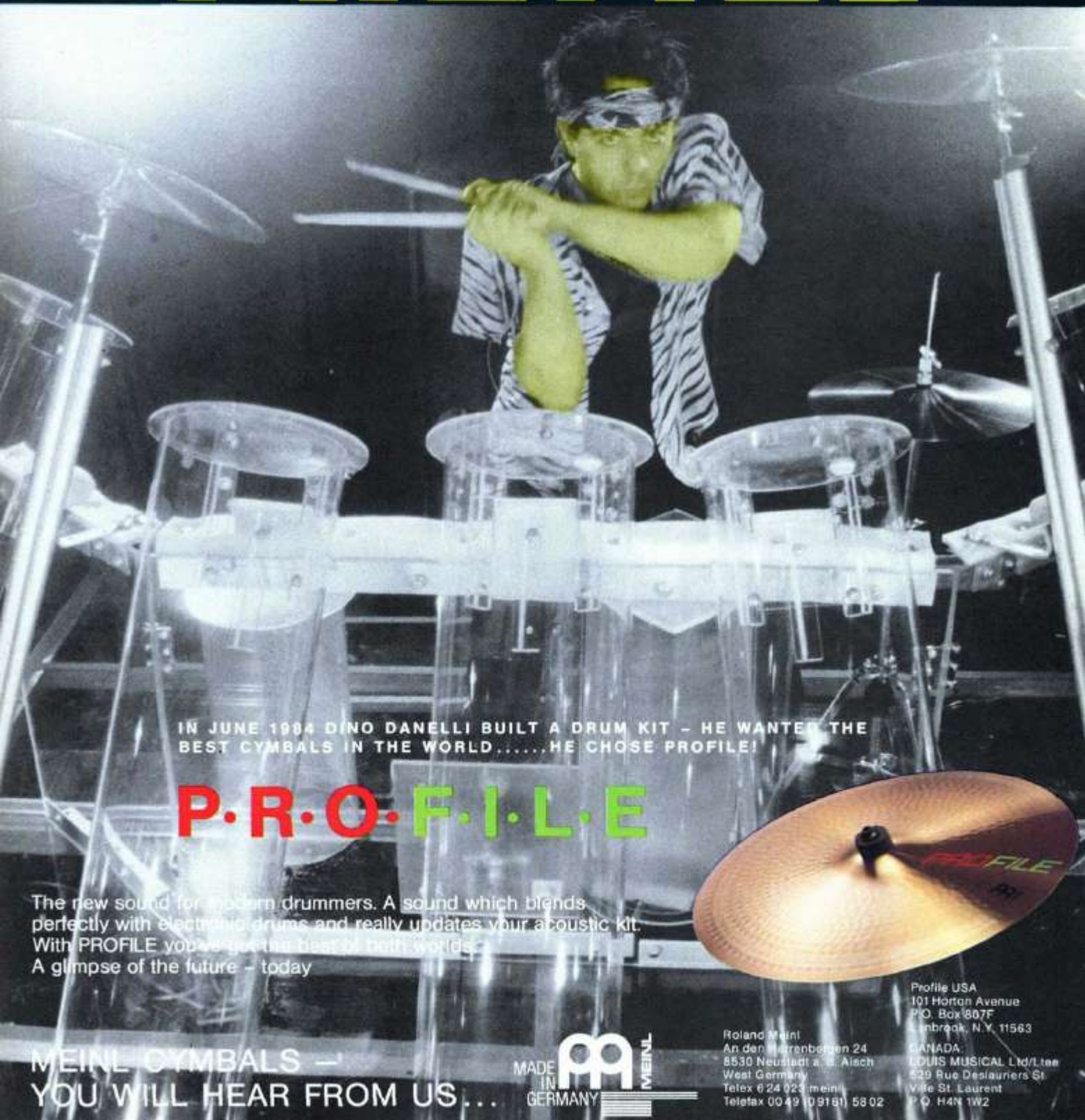
Jim is currently on a tour of the U.S., having been to Europe this past summer, and enjoys playing the show with the growing success of the act. "It's fun, commercial music, and the show we play now is almost nonstop hits," he says. "I enjoy playing 'Neutron Dance,' 'Jump,' 'So Excited,' and 'Fire.' All of them are really fun songs.

"They really like a very solid, metronome style of playing, and they like flash in the playing and in looks, but only in selected areas. You have to be able to sense where to put it in and where not to. The Pointer Sisters are real specific without *telling* you, so you have to sense it. They don't tell you what to play or when, but you know what they want. The music doesn't really lend itself to a lot of busy playing—just good, solid playing. It's taking the record and making a live performance out of it—putting little things in that aren't on the record." — *Robyn Flans*

Look for **Bill Berg** on Wayne Johnson Trio album just out. **Chet McCracken** is on Todd Sharp tracks, and is working with Patrick Gammon, Patrick Simmons, and Tommy Tutone. Chet is also a member of BMW with Tim Bogert and Greg Wright. **Mick Fleetwood** is working on a new Fleetwood Mac album. **Jim Keltner** is on Elvis Costello tracks. **Marvin Kanarek** worked on an LP for Valleria Lynch, jingles for Louisiana Downs, Sparks, Nevada, and *Sprite,* an EP for Red Square, a single ("Toot Toot") for King Cotton, and an album for Show. **Eddie Bayers** on Alabama's Christmas album. **Paul Duskin** can be heard on Robert Fripp's latest release, *Network.* Paul is currently working on a project called Single File. **Keith Knudsen** has been on the road with Southern Pacific. **Butch Miles** plays the Big Horn Jazz Festival in Chicago this month. Butch is also staying busy with a new album on the Famous Door label called *More Butch—More Standards.* New Toto album due out soon with **Jeff Porcaro** on drums. — *Robyn Flans*

PROFILE

DINO DANELLI:



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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

MORELLO IN HOLLYWOOD—AGAIN

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of his first drum clinic presentation in Hollywood, Bob Yeager, owner of the Professional Drum Shop, turned to the artist who started the clinic series in 1960: the incomparable Joe Morello. An audience of several hundred at the Musicians Union auditorium recently saw Joe give his famous demonstration of stick control technique on drumset, and then on snare drum alone. Joe stressed the importance of learning the basic strokes, being able to read, listening to the great drummers of history, and then applying this knowledge to your own style.

"The secret to failure is to try to please everyone," said Joe. "No one has it all covered. It's only natural to try to emulate your favorite drummer at first. Listen and learn all the time, and then use these ideas your own way." Bob Yeager added his own bit of philosophy: "If you're not having fun playing drums, then get out!"

For this musical clinic presentation, Joe was joined by Dave Frishberg (piano), LeRoy Vinegar (bass), Herman Riley (tenor sax), and Bill Berry (cornet) for a swinging session. The rousing finale of "Take Five" had Joe soloing with mallets and then sticks. The audience responded with a standing ovation for this all-star group. — *Tracy Borst*

ZILDJIAN NEWSLETTER

The Avedis Zildjian Company recently announced the introduction of *Get Serious,* a new publication devoted to drummers' news. Zildjian's Director of Artist Relations, Len DiMuzio, said, "As we got into the task of compiling the first issue of the newsletter, we realized immediately what a wealth of news and information we have at our disposal. The number of drummers we come in contact with on a daily basis in our travels or as they come by the factory gives us a great opportunity to collect firsthand news and gossip about new projects." After the initial issue this past summer and a follow-up this fall, Zildjian plans to make *Get Serious* a quarterly publication, according to communications director David Deranian.

GADD AT DRUMMERS COLLECTIVE

Steve Gadd recently conducted a master class for a small group of students at Drummers Collective. The first in a series of such classes, the two-hour session saw Steve demonstrating and explaining many of his "trademark" styles and approaches. Each of the 12 students in attendance had ample opportunity to ask questions on various aspects of Steve's technique and specific parts he had played on records. For information on upcoming classes with Steve Gadd, or on the many other classes being offered at the Collective, please write Drummers Collective, 541 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10011, or call (212)741-0091.

SIMMONS CLINIC TOUR

Group Centre, Inc., the exclusive U.S. distributor of Simmons electronic drums, has announced its plans to sponsor nearly 100 drum clinics and seminars at authorized Simmons dealers and major universities throughout the U.S. during the coming months. The clinics will be heavily promoted through music industry media and many will be cosponsored by the Sabian, Paiste, and Zildjian cymbal companies.

The clinics will feature an impressive lineup of artists, such as Jimmy Bralower, Tom Brechtlein, Tony Brock, Gerry Brown, Bill Bruford, Denny Carmassi, Vinnie Colaiuta, Phil Collins, Sly Dunbar, Peter Erskine, Josh Freese, Rayford Griffin, Sandy Gennaro, Tris Imboden, Jim Keltner, Ricky Lawson, Larrie Londin, Harvey Mason, Jonathan Moffett, John Robinson', Chester Thompson, and Chad Wackerman. Anyone interested in further details is requested to contact Group Centre at 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, CA 91302, (818)884-2653.

AFM CONVENTION UPDATES BYLAWS

The 86th Convention of the American Federation of Musicians (of the U.S. and Canada), held recently, included debate on key issues affecting retirees and traveling players. Some 721 delegates, representing over 230,000 members, approved bylaw changes, and took other actions to strengthen the union at every level and assure continuation of improved member services.

In his opening remarks, President Victor W. Fuentealba reported to the delegates on the success of the recently instituted service program for local unions, and on the progress made in the AFM's first Federation-wide membership drive. The drive, he said, had been so well accepted by young musicians that it will be repeated in October, November, and December of this year. Fuentealba also reported on the AFM's efforts to have the Taft-Hartley Act (the labor law that presently denies collective bargaining rights to most nightclub and lounge musicians) amended. He said a dozen U.S. Senators had signed on as cosponsors of Senate Bill 670, the Pell-Weiker Performing Arts Bill, and added that similar legislation (H.R. 2761) had been introduced in the House of Representatives. He also spoke of the AFM's effort to counter misinformation about the pending legislation being spread by a small but vocal group of theatrical agents. According to Fuentealba, the group, the International Theatrical Agent's Association (ITAA), appears to confuse tax law issues with labor law deliberately as part of a self-serving campaign to control employment opportunities for nightclub and lounge musicians. Labor law, he emphasized, is the Federation's only concern. The ITAA, he added, is made up of only about 100 agents, while approximately 2,000 are signatories to AFM booking agent agreements.

The longest debate on the convention floor dealt with proposed changes in the status of honorary or life members who pay little or no dues, but receive union benefits and have a strong voice in local union operations. The present status of such members has created a considerable burden on many locals, and with the number of retirees growing, the burden could only increase. Delegates agreed to amend the bylaws so as to require such members to begin to pay 25% of the amount of an active member's periodic dues, as of January, 1986. In January, 1987, the amount will become 50%. According to the new regulations, in order to become an honorary or life member, a member must belong to a local union for 35 consecutive years or more, and be at least 70 years of age. Current honorary or life members will, of course, retain their status as long as they adhere to the new dues structure starting in January. In discussing the honorary or life member situation, Fuentealba reminded the delegates of the Federation's slogan, "We're the professionals!" and said that, in order to remain a viable union—as opposed to a fraternal organization—the AFM must continually strive to improve the professional well-being of working musicians.

Delegates also debated work dues levels for traveling members (working outside the jurisdiction of the locals to which they belong). In addition to other programs aimed at improving things for traveling players, an amendment was adopted placing a 4% maximum on work dues for members who earn their living on the road.

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PREMIER PROJECTOR KITS

Premier Percussion USA Inc. has just introduced a new line of drumkits and individual drums called *Projector.* These drums are Premier's answer to market demand for a reasonably priced birch shell drumkit with full features and top-line hardware.

Projector drumshells are made of select, cross-laminated birch, with beech reinforcing rings. The shells are somewhat thinner than standard for increased resonance and depth of tone, while the beech reinforcing rings at the bearing edge add strength where shell stresses are greatest. A complete selection of drum sizes and styles is available in the *Projector* line. Bass drums and tom-toms are available in all popular sizes, in both standard and power drum depths. A selection of floor toms and concert toms up to 18" head diameter is also offered. The kits are available with either Premier *Tristar* or new *Prolock* hardware.

Tom Meyers, Premier Percussion USA Inc. Vice President (Sales and Marketing), commented on the introduction of the new line. "The Premier design philosophy has always been one of thin, strong shells for maximum resonance. *Projector* drums are consistent with this design, and allow us to offer the drummer a wider variety of sizes and finishes than we have ever offered before. Our new factory-direct distribution has helped us price *Projector* kits lower than other sets of similar quality."

For more information, contact Premier Percussion USA Inc., 105 Fifth Avenue, Garden City Park, NY 11040.

GRETSCH CANNON BASS DRUMS

Gretsch is now offering *Cannon* bass drums in its new high-quality, handcrafted line. Twelve sizes, from 18" head by 18" deep to 22" head by 24" deep, are available. The drums are offered in all of Gretsch's many colors. In addition to increasing the depth and pitch of the bass sound, the *Cannon* bass drums add projection and volume, along with extraordinary visual impact. Contact Gretsch Drums, P.O. Box 358, Ridgeland, SC 29936.

EUROPA UNVEILS SOUND CHEST II

Europa Technology, Inc. has announced its distribution of the J.L. Cooper *Sound Chest II,* a programmable MIDI drum computer consisting of individual Voice Modules under the control of a Computer Module. Triggered by drum pads, MIDI Note On commands, and tape sources, the Voice Modules contain a basic drum sound and space for an additional sound chip set of the user's choice. Each Voice Module boasts extensive programming capabilities, including volume, tuning, dynamic tuning, dynamic filter, and decay rate. Additionally, the user can program up to ten patch chains of 16 steps each. The *Sound Chest II*'s MIDI features include Send/Receive Program Changes, MIDI Channel Select, Individual Note Assignment, Send/Receive Dynamic Pad Hit Data, and MIDI Enable/Disable. The rack-mountable unit is available as a basic system with five Voice Modules and a Computer Module. Contact Europa Technology, Inc., 1638 W. Washington Blvd., Venice, CA 90291, (213) 392-4985.

YAMAHA RX11 DIGITAL DRUM MACHINE

Yamaha's new *RX11* Digital Rhythm Programmer is an expanded companion to their RX15. The 29 percussion sounds of the *RX11* can be routed to a mixing console through 12 1/4" phonejacks for individual instrument outputs, stereo left and right mixed outputs, or any combination of the two. Percussion sounds include two bass drums, eight snare drums, two rimshots, two open and two closed hi-hats, a hi-hat pedal, four tom-toms, ride and crash cymbals, two handclaps, two cowbells, and shaker. These sounds can be programmed into patterns in real time or step by step. Once programmed, patterns may be stored in the *RX 11's* memory, or externally using cassette tape or Yamaha *RAM 1* memory cartridges. The unit measures 15 3/4" by 2 3/4" by 10 5/8" and weighs under 1 1/2 pounds.

The *RX11* features MIDI compatibility, complete control of each instrument's level, accent and pan, and extensive flexibility in time signature and note values. The built-in memory can store up to 99 patterns and 10 songs of up to 255 parts per song. For more information, see your Yamaha dealer, or contact Yamaha International Corp., Combo Products Division, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.

ELECTRONICS FROM DRUM WORKSHOP

Drum Workshop's engineers have developed the new *DW EP-1:* the first electronic trigger pedal with the natural feel, and reflex of a conventional bass drum pedal. Don Lombardi, President of DW, says, "Now you can get the punch of a second bass drum . . . the twang of a reggae snare . . . the shimmer of a Chinese gong—all without changing your current setup!"

The DWEP-1 is both a pedal and an electronic bass drum all in one. It is specially designed to be fully compatible with Simmons and most other electronic drums. It combines the famous chain-drive action of DW's 5000 *Turbo* with a special new pickup to produce a wider, more dynamic range. There is also both an input and an output jack, to make it easy to expand your present set. For more information, contact your local dealer or write Drum Workshop, 2697 Lavery Court #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320.

SIXTIES ROCK: A LISTENER'S GUIDE

In the wake of growing interest in the music and artists of the '60s comes *Sixties Rock: A Listener's Guide,* a new book by *MD* contributing writer and rock critic Robert Santelli. The book provides an entertaining and comprehensive look at the rock artists from the volatile '60s and the music they made. Santelli provides overviews of every major rock category of the decade, including Teen Idols, Instrumental Groups, Early Pop, Girl Groups, Sounds of Surf, British Invasions and American Responses, Motown, Folk Rock, Blues Rock, Soul Sounds, and Heavy Metal. Each category includes bios of the most important artists, as well as reviews of the classic albums of the genre. Also included are photos, appendices, recommended periodicals for record collectors, and a detailed index. The book is available in paperback in retail bookstores, or you may contact Contemporary Books, Inc., 189 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601, (312) 782-9181.

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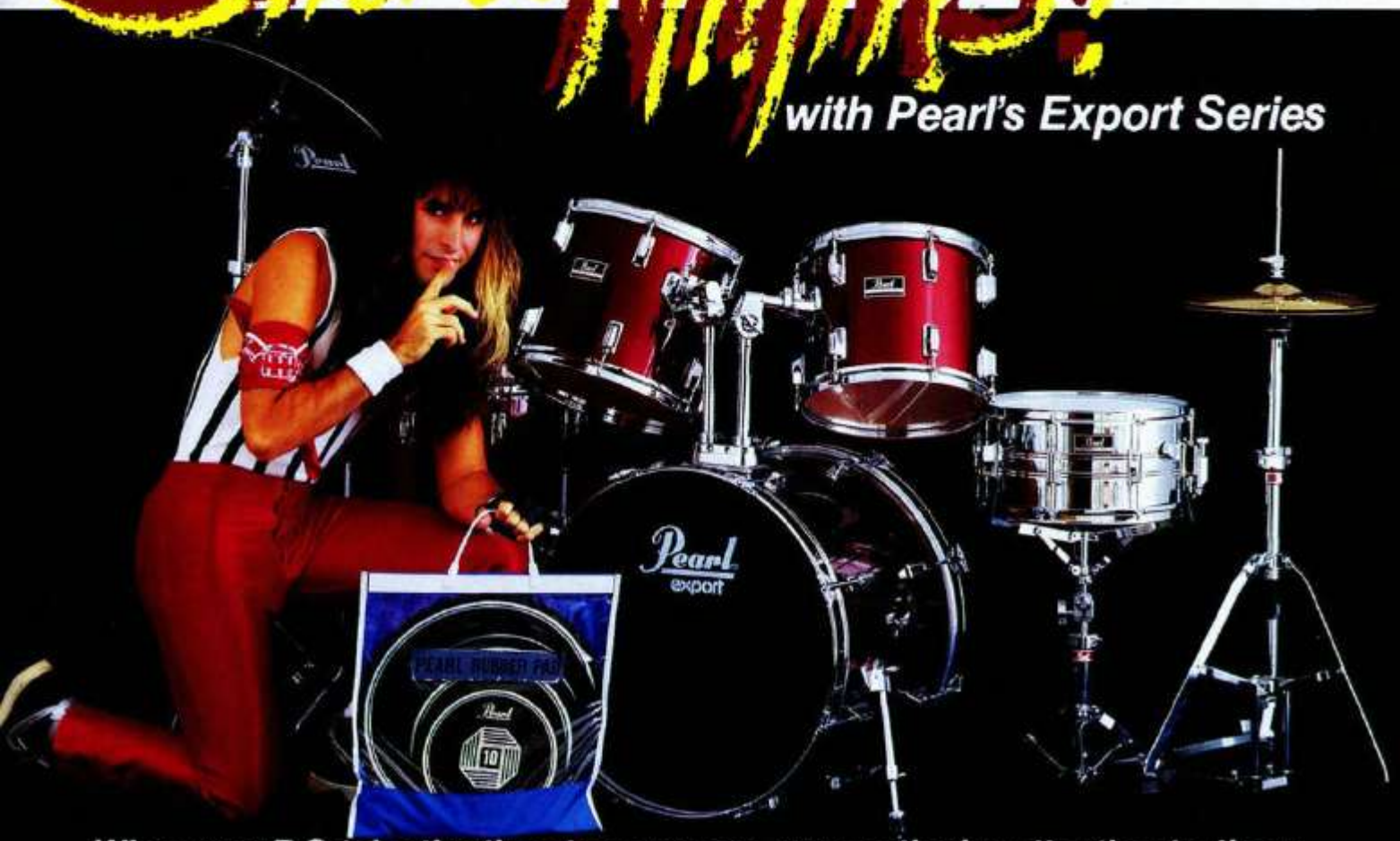

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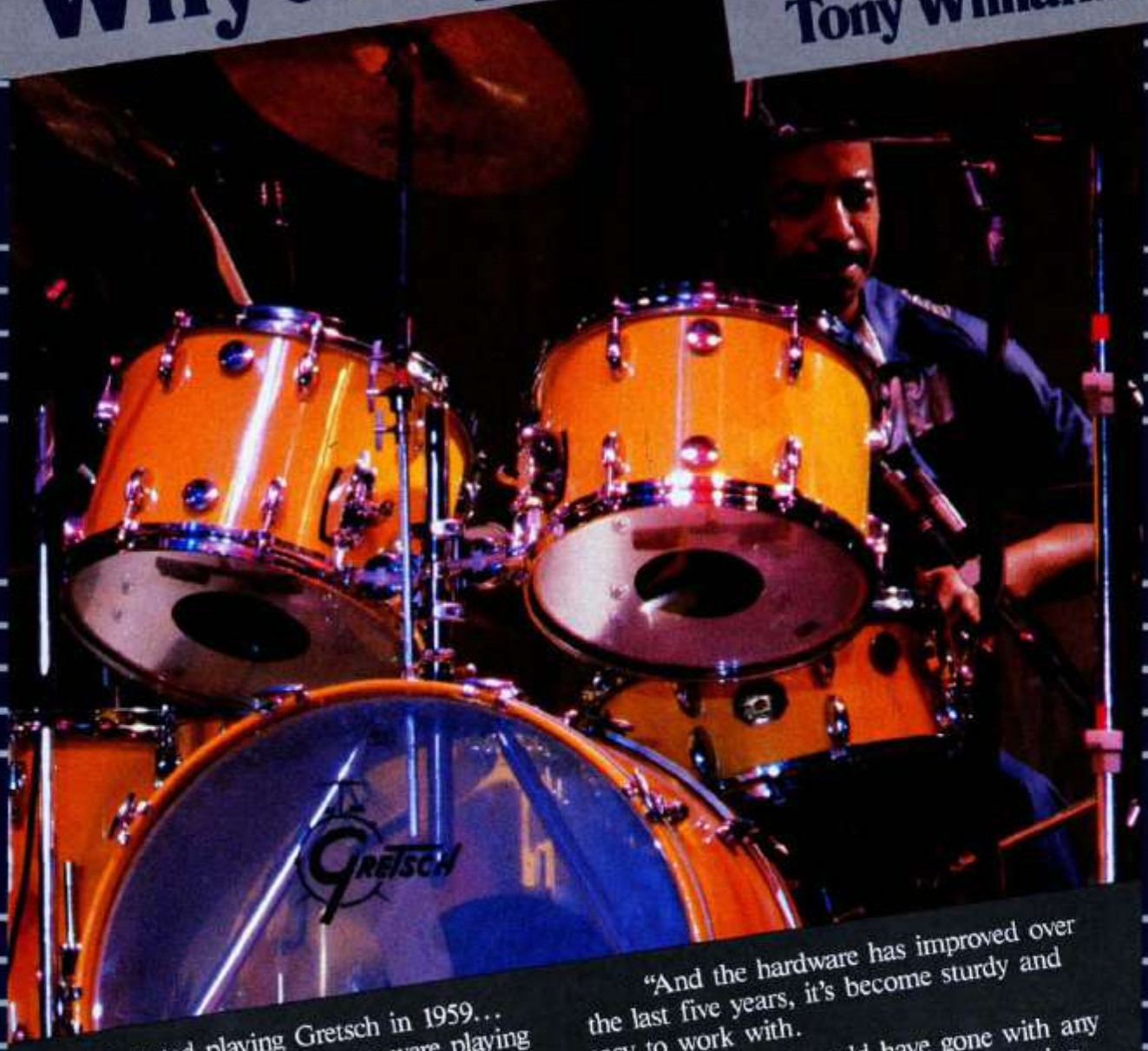

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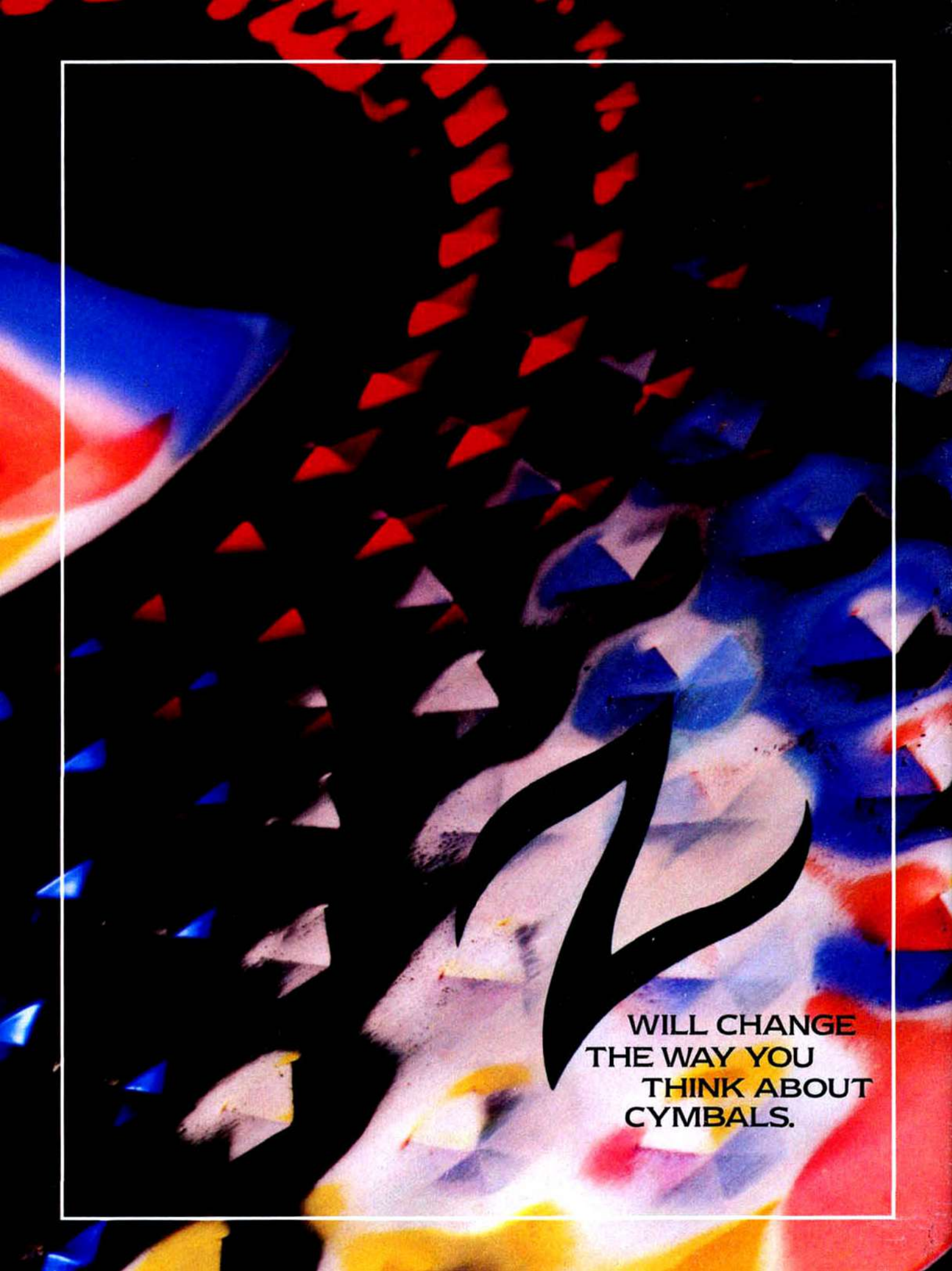
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